

Image of
the Turks
in the 17th
century Europe



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The Ottoman Empire and Europe in the 17th century: Changing images

Günsel Renda

Over the centuries cultural relations between Europe and the Ottomans followed a course shaped by political events and economic developments. From the 15th century these relations varied according to political alliances, victories and defeats, and often the personalities of art patrons and statesmen. In the 16th century the Ottoman Empire was seen by Europeans as a state ruled by powerful sovereigns that played an important role in the European balance of power. Although this was a period of conflict between Europe and the empire, the policies pursued by Süleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566) in particular during the 46 years of his reign and the trade privileges he granted to Europeans both served to boost cultural relations. The images which appear in European art were mostly portraits of Ottoman rulers and statesmen, and dazzling palace ceremonies and costumes. At the same time, almost every artist who visited the Ottoman capital drew or painted views of Istanbul's outstanding scenery and its remarkable buildings. During this century travel accounts and illustrated books about Turkey multiplied in Europe.

Among the earliest was that by Pieter Coecke van Aelst of Antwerp, who in 1533 was sent by the Van der Moyen factory in Brussels to sell gobelin to the Ottoman palace, published a book about Turkish manners and customs, illustrated by his own drawings of Istanbul scenes.¹ Nicolas de Nicolay, who accompanied the French king Henri II's ambassador Gabriel d'Aramon to Istanbul in 1553, did pictures of Ottoman life and costumes, engravings made from which were reproduced in *Les quatre premiers livres de navigations et peregrinations orientales* published in Lyon in 1568.² Nicolas de Nicolay's drawings of costumes in particular became a source of inspiration for many artists over the next centuries, because he recorded in detail the costumes worn by every class of state official and different social groups. For example, Abraham Bruyn made use of Nicolay's drawings in his *Habits de diverses nations Omnium pene Europae* published in 1581. Similarly, C. Vecellio made use of Nicolay's book for the Turkish costumes in his book *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo*, for the seventh part entitled 'Habiti de Turchi.'³ Costumes were regarded as the symbol of regions, cultures and social classes in Europe, and costume pictures became increasingly numerous from the 16th century. The printing press was an important factor in the increase of these publications, known as

¹ *Ces moeurs et fachons de faire de Turcs* 1553.

² For a modern edition of this work see Gomez-Géraud and Yerasimos 1989.

³ Rouillard 1938, p. 278; *Venezia ei Turchi* 1985.

Trachtenbuch or costume books, which featured costumes worn in Europe, Asia and even the New World.

The most realistic pictures drawn during Süleyman's reign were those by Melchior Lorichs of Flensburg who in 1555 accompanied Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, ambassador from the Holy Roman Empire to the Ottoman court. During the five years that he remained in Istanbul, he also wrote a book about Ottoman politics and military affairs of the period. His panorama of Istanbul is one of the most important visual records of the time.⁴ We find portraits of Ottoman sultans and even genealogical trees in books about Turkey by European writers. Examples include Guillaume Rouillé's *Promptuarium Iconum* dated 1553, and Francesco Sansovino's *Sommario et Alboro delli Principi Othomani* dated 1567.⁵ The most famous series of portraits of Ottoman sultans published in Europe was found in *Elogia Virorum Bellica Virtute Illustirum* by the Italian collector Paolo Giovio published in 1577.⁶ Several books of this kind, both in manuscript and printed, were produced during the second half of the 16th century.⁷ But despite their numbers, these 16th century books generally used pictures based on repetitive models that reflected a fearsome rather than realistic Turkish image. Following the 1529 Siege of Vienna, anti-Turkish propaganda became rife, and exaggerated images of Turkish rulers and soldiers were printed and distributed in the form of single prints.

From the turn of the 17th century, however, European attitudes to the Ottomans changed, as they realised that the superior power that the Ottomans had enjoyed in the 16th century had waned. In place of the former defensive policies, Europeans intensified diplomatic relations with the object of forging political alliances with the Ottomans and concluding trade agreements. Throughout the 17th century embassies sent by countries such as England, Holland, Sweden, France and Austria collected information about Ottoman state organisation, the palace and the daily life of the people in order to become more closely acquainted with Turkey. Often they brought artists with them to document events and scenes in pictures. As a result publications about Turkey and the Turks increased still further, and most of these were illustrated.

For example, some of the English ambassadors, whose duties in the Ottoman capital focused on promoting trade relations, gathered information about the country that was published in books of the foremost importance. One of the most valuable historical sources about Ottoman Turkey is Richard Knolles' *The Generall Historie of the Turkes from the First beginning of That Nation to the Rising of the Othoman Familie with All the Notable Expeditions of the Christian Princes Against Them Together with the Lives of and Conquests of the Othoman Kings and Emperours* published in 1603. While Peter Mundy, who arrived in Istanbul as representative of the Turkey Company in 1616, was in Istanbul, he commissioned

⁴ This book was not published until 1626, after his death. Fischer 1962; Copenhagen 1990.

⁵ Raby 2000, p.138

⁶ For Giovio and his work see Istanbul 2000, pp. 141-150

⁷ Rouillard 1938; And 1993.



1. P. Rycaut, *Historie Der drie laatste Turksche Keizers*, Amsterdam 1684.



2. *Mundy Album*, A briefe relation of the Turckes, their Kings, Emperours or grandsigneurs. British Library 1974-6-17, fols. 44v-45r.

an album depicting the diverse costumes worn in the Ottoman Empire and took this back to England on his return.⁸ (fig. 2) One of the most important sources for the Ottoman Empire during this century is the book by Sir Paul Rycaut, Secretary to the Earl of Winchelsea, who was sent as ambassador to Sultan Mehmet IV by Charles II in 1661, and who served as British consul in Izmir until 1679. His three-volume *History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, printed in London in 1668, contains a detailed account of Ottoman government and daily life. In 1700 a revised edition of this work, updated to cover events up to the year 1699, was printed in two volumes.⁹ (fig. 1) Various editions of this book, which was translated into a number of languages, including French, German, Italian and even Polish, were illustrated by portraits of the Ottoman sultans and the costumes worn by government officials. The French translation entitled *Receuil de diverse figures turques* published in 1670 is illustrated with engravings by Sebastian le Clerc. While some of these are copied from Rycaut, others are taken from other sources, such as Melchior Lorichs.¹⁰

In the 17th century diplomatic and trade relations with the French also flourished as a result of the endeavours of François Savary, ambassador of Henri IV to the Ottoman court from 1590 to 1606. The Ottomans, too, sent embassies to France, and these relations left their mark on both countries. For example, the visit to Fontainebleau by the Ottoman embassy to France in 1607 aroused wide-

⁸ A brief relation of the Turckes, their Kings, Emperours or grandsigneurs. British Library 1974-6-17.

⁹ The History of the Turks beginning with the year 1679 being a full Relation of the last Troubles in Hungary with the Sieges of Vienna and Buda and all the several Battles both by Sea and Land between the Christians and the Turks until the end of the year 1698 and 1699 in which the peace between the Turks and the Confederate Christian princes and States was happily concluded at Carlowitz in Hungary by the Mediation of His Majesty of Great Britain and the States General of the United Provinces, London 1700.

¹⁰ St. Claire 1973, p. 45, no. 32.

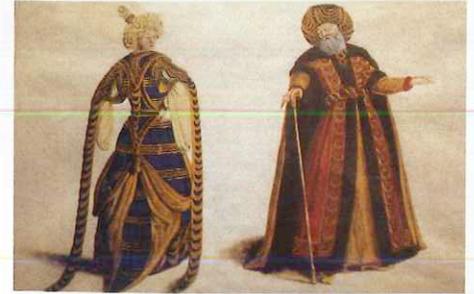
spread interest, and a few years later musicians dressed in Turkish costume performed at a ballet entitled *Balet de Monseigneur le duc de Vendome*.¹¹ The Ottoman embassy of Süleyman Ağa, who was sent to the court of Louis XIV by Mehmet IV in 1669, was even more influential, prompting Molière to incorporate a Turkish ceremony in his play *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and André Campra to devote a scene to Turkey in his operatic ballet *L'Europe Gallante*.¹²

Throughout this century many French books about the Ottoman Empire were published. *L'histoire de la decadence de l'Empire grec et establissement de Celvy des turcs* by Laonicos Chalcokondyles published in 1612 contains portraits of the sultans, and Michel Baudier's *Histoire generale du Serrail et de la Cour du Grand Seigneur* dated 1624 and *Histoire generale de la Religion des Turcs* dated 1625 contain both portraits of the reigning sultan Murad IV and symbolic pictures relating to the Islamic faith.¹³

When French ambassador Jean de la Haye arrived in Istanbul in 1641 to renew the capitulation agreements, he was accompanied by an artist from Caen, George de la Chappelle, who did a series of pictures. His twelve pictures of Ottoman women in the typical costumes of their type were published in *Recevl de divers portraits de principales dames de la porte dv grand tvrc* dated 1648. In his dedication to Madame Comtesse de Fiesque in this book, the artist explained that earlier illustrated sources had largely documented men's costumes, and that this neglect of women was his reason for paying special attention to the attire of women during his visit. He says that his drawings were checked for accuracy by the ambassador La Haye. On the title page of this book are portrayed not a woman, however, but busts of Sultan Murad and Sultan Ibrahim set in medallions above the title, which is flanked by figures of a janissary and a sipahi (cat. 48). In the background is a battle scene, and below scenes of torture. Chappelle's pictures of women are fairly realistic, and great care has been taken with the details of their garments. Their head-dresses, flaring towards the crown, are typical of that commonly worn in the mid-17th century. The panoramic views of Istanbul in the background of these pictures are also based on observation. Many European artists took Chappelle's figures as patterns for their own, and as we will see, the oil paintings of women in the Ptuj collection are copies of that artist's engravings.

The number of foreign travellers to the Ottoman Empire increased significantly in the second half of the century, and more realistic and detailed books about the Ottoman Empire began to appear. Jean Thévenot, who visited Istanbul in the 1650s, gives very detailed information about daily life in his book, which was first published in 1681.¹⁴

Diplomatic and cultural relations with the Dutch also prospered in the 17th century. The visit of ambassador Cornelis Haga, who came to conclude an agreement



3. Actors with Turkish costumes, Ludovico Ottavio Burnacini, 17th century, ÖNB, Theatersammlung Min 20.

¹¹ And 1958, p.14

¹² Desmet-Grégoire 1980, pp.18-19

¹³ Rouillard 1938, p. 281

¹⁴ Thévenot 1687, I, sp18, 61

granting trading rights to the Dutch in 1612, and the increasing volume of trade with Holland resulted in large quantities of Turkish goods and works of art being taken to Holland. Dutch ambassador Levinus Warner, who arrived in 1655, carried Ottoman manuscripts back. As a result Turkish motifs proliferated in Flemish art, celebrated painters such as Rembrandt and Rubens portraying figures in Turkish dress.¹⁵ Books about Ottoman Turkey were also published, such as that by Cornelis de Bruyn, who travelled in the Near East for nearly 19 years from 1674. During these extensive travels De Bruyn visited many cities in the Ottoman Empire and documented them in pictures. He showed both his text and pictures to ambassadors in Istanbul for confirmation of their accuracy, and they were published in 1698. This book was subsequently translated into both French and English. Entitled *Reizen van Cornelis de Bruyn door de Vermaardste Deelen van Klein Asia, de eylanden Scio, Rhodus, Cyprus, Metelino, Stancho, etc. Mitsgaders de voornaamste Steden van Aegypten, Syrien en Palestina. Verrijkt met meer als 200 koopere Konstplaten, vertoonende de beroemdste Landschappen, Steden, etc. Alles door den Auteur selfs na het leven afgeteekend*, it contains many pictures of the major buildings in the places he visited and of daily life.

Among Cornelis de Bruyn's pictures his city panoramas are of particular interest (cats. 3-5). Such panoramas had become popular in the 16th century and even more widespread in the 17th. Some of these depicted Istanbul as seen from the northern shore of the Golden Horn, the usual standpoint for 16th century panoramas, such as the famous example by Melchior Lorichs. Increasingly, however, panoramas showing the city from the ridge of Pera above the Golden Horn, or the hills of Üsküdar on the eastern shore of the Bosphorus became common, the latter type enabling the artist to show include the Bosphorus as well as the Golden Horn in the same picture. The two-section panorama by De Bruyn in the exhibition is of this type (cat. 5), and we encounter many other similar examples.

Original panoramas in oil are few, however, which is why the two oil panoramas in the exhibition are of particular significance. The view of Seraglio Point showing Topkapı Palace and Hagia Eirene is an important record of the different buildings and pavilions of the palace, both those belonging to the main palace complex on the headland, and those at the water's edge, such as Sepetçiler Kasrı and Yalı Köşk (cat. 1-2). Since Revan Köşk built in 1636, Bağdat Köşk built in 1639 and Sepetçiler Kasrı built in 1643 are clearly visible, therefore these panoramas must be of a later date, possibly of the early 18th century. The larger scale panorama stretches from the hillside of Pera to the islands in the Marmara Sea, and includes Sarayburnu and Kadıköy. Beneath the picture the names of each district are written in Italian, and buildings like the French Palace and an Ottoman palace, possibly Galata Saray in the Galata district, and the Topkapı Palace and the church of Hagia Sophia on the far

¹⁵ Renda 2002, pp. 1106-1107.

right, and even the imperial barge off Sarayburnu headland bear legends (cat. 1). After the 17th century panoramas depicted the topography, scenery and weather conditions in the city with increasing sensitivity, taking on the nature of true landscapes illustrating both the scenery and inhabitants of Istanbul.

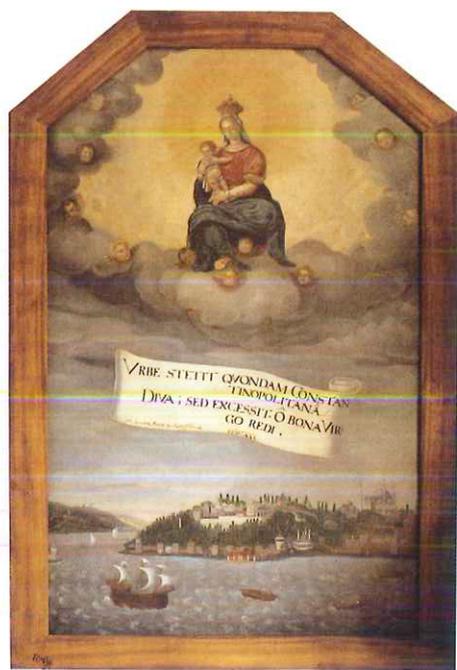
Diplomatic relations and art

As we have seen, the artists who came to Istanbul from the 16th century onwards were the travel photographers of their day, and their pictures are documentary sources of key importance. Most of their works are in the form of engravings illustrating books, but occasionally they were published as single prints independent of a text. These pictures served as inspiration for many 17th century European artists, who without visiting Turkey themselves did oil paintings based on them. Some of the diplomats and other officials who visited Turkey commissioned paintings on their return home, and the artists made use of existing engravings. Such pictures based on secondary sources are sometimes faithful copies, but more often embroidered with exotic details. Gaining access to original paintings by artists who visited the Ottoman Empire is more difficult, since they are found only in a few collections.

Among such 17th century collections that of Kuefstein is of major importance. At a time when the Holy Roman Empire was under threat from the Protestants, Baron Hans Ludwig Kuefstein (1582-1656) was sent as ambassador to Sultan Murad IV in 1628 by the Austrian emperor Ferdinand II, charged with extending the Zsitvatorok Agreement of 1606. Baron Kuefstein kept a journal during the eight months that he remained in Turkey, and the artists in his entourage painted pictures recording the places visited by the delegation and incidents on the journey, audience ceremonies at the Ottoman palace, the sultan and his court, and scenes of daily life in Istanbul.¹⁶ Kuefstein's entourage included several noblemen, physicians and a chaplain. On the outward journey he encountered the Ottoman ambassador Receb Pasha on his way to the court in Vienna on the banks of the Danube, which demarcated the Austrian-Ottoman border. After this meeting the Austrian ambassador proceeded on his way, passing through Edirne and finally arriving in Istanbul. His artists depicted the delegation being met on arrival, and his audiences with the grand vezir and Sultan Murad IV. Most of these oil and gouache paintings are in the *Türkensaal* (Turkish Room) at Greillenstein Castle belonging to the Kuefstein family.¹⁷ Eleven of the gouache paintings were sold by the family to Perchtoldsdorf Museum near Vienna, and others found their way into private collections. Those exhibited here are examples from these private collections. The gouache pictures are smaller, and were probably pain-

¹⁶ Teply 1976.

¹⁷ Perchtoldsdorf 1983.



4. The Virgin Mary in the skies of Istanbul. Kuefstein Collection, Greillenstein Castle.

ted in Istanbul as studies for the large oil paintings executed later. This explains why some of them are dated 1630 and some 1634. Those of later date must have been painted later after sketches made at the time. According to documentary records the paintings in the Kuefstein collection are the work of Franz Hörmann and Hans Gemminger.¹⁸ Hörmann later employed the painter Valentin Müller as his assistant. Some of the paintings depict places where the delegation halted on their journey and ceremonies they attended. Most of the paintings in Greillenstein Castle are large portraits in oil, the most important of these being the full-length portraits of Murad IV and his mother Kösem Sultan, and the others include a vezir, a pasha, seven high-ranking officials, a janissary, some figures of women, and even wrestlers. Perhaps most interesting of all is the ex-voto painting executed to celebrate the ambassador's safe return, showing the Virgin Mary in the skies of Istanbul (fig. 4). The paintings belonging to the Kuefstein family form the largest of the ambassadorial collections.¹⁹ Curiously, there are two copies of some of the paintings, both multi-figure scenes and single portraits. Almost all have brief explanations in German.

One of the two portraits in the exhibition is of a Mevlevi dervish, entitled *Ein Turggischer Heiliger* 16-30 (cat. 9). There are fewer pictures of women in the Kuefstein collection. The portrait of a woman in the Simavi collection appears from her rich garb and jewellery to be a palace woman (cat. 11), and this is confirmed by the caption describing her as a daughter of the sultan: 'Eine Sultanisch Tochter so einem hohen officer ver mählt und zum zaichen ihres standes und der herscahft uber den Man den Tolch Tregt.' Certainly it is impossible that the artist should have actually seen any of the women in the imperial harem, but he has attempted to create the image of a palace woman. The curtained background scene symbolises the woman's status. She is dressed magnificently and holds a jewelled dagger in her hand. Despite some exaggeration in the fabric motifs of her garments and the form of her headdress, on the whole her costume reflects the characteristics of the period.²⁰

A significant aspect of the Kuefstein paintings is that they are based on sketches executed in situ by artists who visited Turkey, so those showing the various places the embassy halted on its journey and the ceremonial scenes are important contemporary documents. For example, one picture of Harmanlı Han – one of the largest kervansarays of the period situated on the Edirne road – shows us the architectural features of this building, where the embassy halted en route (cat. 7). On the right are legends in German identifying each part of the kervansaray and their function. Another picture of the same size portrays a funeral and is entitled *Ein Türkische Begrebness* (cat. 10). Below the title is information about the clerics proceeding in front and the people who are carrying the coffin, at one end of which is a turban.

¹⁸ Sims 1988, p. 37.

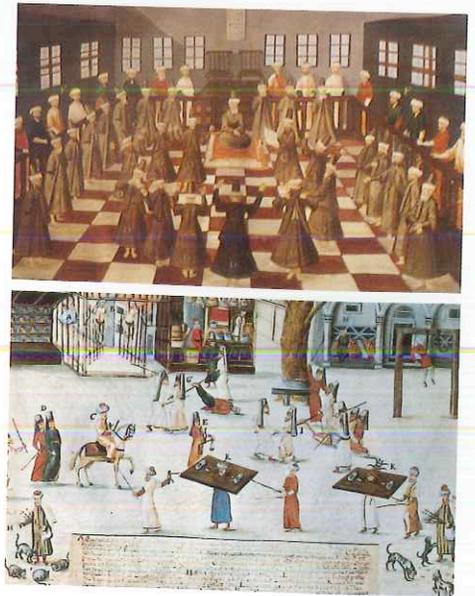
¹⁹ Mansel 1988, pp. 11-18.

²⁰ Sims 1988, pp. 29-30.



The large painting of a Mevlevi ceremony entitled *Eine Türckischer Pretig* also has additional information beneath the title (cat. 8). A small gouache version of this painting is in Perchtoldsdorf Museum.²¹ In past centuries many painters who visited Ottoman Turkey were fascinated by dervishes and Mevlevi ceremonies. Details of this interior scene of a Mevlevi lodge, such as the floor covering and inscriptions on the walls, show that the artist actually visited the building. (fig. 6) Another subject we find depicted are Ottoman forms of punishment (cat. 6), and in this painting there are written explanations of eight corporal punishments including the beating of the tied feet, and a method in which the dishonest man has to wear a big board on his neck with hanging bells and wall in the streets and more cruel punishments. (fig. 7)

During the almost 40 years of Mehmed IV's reign (1648-1687), many foreign embassies came to the Ottoman capital. Following the lull of the first half of the century, this period was a time of renewed conflict for both the Ottoman Empire and the countries of Europe. Various campaigns and treaties gave rise to intensive diplomatic traffic. Diplomatic relations with the Swedes, who allied with the Ottomans against Russia and Austria, gained momentum for example. In 1657 the Swedish king Karl X sent Claes Brorson Rålamb as ambassador to Mehmed IV. Although this ambassador



5. Rålamb Collection. Nordiska Museet in Stockholm.

6. Mevlevi Lodge. Kuefstein Collection, Perchtoldsdorf Museum.

7. Punishments. Kuefstein Collection, Perchtoldsdorf Museum.

²¹ Perchtoldsdorf 1983, p. 80.

was not, for various reasons, notably successful in his diplomatic mission, the collection of 20 paintings which he commissioned are significant. These paintings, which today are in Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, portray the sultan, his grand vezir, and state officials of numerous types.²² Rålamb kept a diary, in which he recorded for 23 and 24 May that he watched the sultan and his household, janissaries and sipahis leaving Istanbul to spend the summer in Edirne. Behind the figures on horseback or walking are mosques and other buildings symbolising the city of Istanbul, although none of these can be specifically identified. Evidently the artist was concerned not so much with the background scene as with the figures and their costumes. Information about the various state officials is given on the paintings in Swedish (fig. 5).

The outbreak of war between the Ottomans and Habsburgs in the second half of the 17th century changed relations between the two sides. In 1663 the Ottomans captured Uyvar and Novigrad, while the Austrians besieged Zsitvatorok, and this series of reciprocal victories and defeats concluded with the Treaty of Vasvár in 1664. Diplomatic exchanges gained momentum, of special significance being the visit to the court of Leopold I in Vienna in 1665 by the Ottoman ambassador Kara Mehmed Ağa. Such diplomatic missions were not only political activities, but also left their mark in the cultural sphere. For example, the Ottoman military *mehter* band which accompanied the embassy of Kara Mehmed Ağa influenced European music. Another aspect of this embassy is the account by Evliya Çelebi, who was a member of the delegation, in his *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels). As the first Turkish work about Europe, this spurred Ottoman interest in European life.

This exhibition presents a collection that throws light on these relations. The collection belonging to the family of Johann Joseph von Herberstein, who accompanied Count Walter Leslie to Istanbul in 1665-66, is today in Pokrajinski Museum in Ptuj Castle in Slovenia.²³ From 1656 the Leslie family lived in this castle, and the Herbersteins brought part of their collection here from the nearby Vurberk Castle in 1907, and part from Hrastovec Castle in 1925. In the inventories for Vurberk Castle these paintings are described as the 'Turqueries,' and they must have been commissioned by various members of the family following the return of the embassy.²⁴

Among the 47 paintings from the collection exhibited here, sixteen bust portraits form a distinct group. These are portraits of Sultan Mehmed IV and Ottoman statesmen, or rather the figures who played a prominent role in the wars of 1663-64 and in political events involving Europe during the 1660s. Italian legends on the paintings give the names and posts held by the individuals portrayed (cats. 32-47). These portraits were copied from illustrations in Count Galeazzo Gualdo Priorato's *Historia de Leopoldo Cesare* published in 1669-1670. Leopold I (1655-1705), Austrian

²² Ådahl 1995, pp. 13-16.

²³ These pictures were first exhibited in 1992: Ptuj 1992.

²⁴ For detailed information about the pictures see Grothaus 1992, pp. 69-79.

archduke and king of Hungary and Bohemia, joined the holy alliance against the Turks and reconquered Hungary. This book about his youth is illustrated with portraits by Dutch and Italian artists, and some of them bear notes explaining that they were executed in Vienna or Venice. Most are by the Dutch artist Jacob Toorenvliet (1641-1719), who at that time was working in Vienna.²⁵ It is not clear what sources were used for these pictures. Polona Vidmar says that this group of pictures was commissioned either by Alexander or Jacob, counts of Leslie, in memory of their uncle Walter Leslie, who went to Istanbul in 1665.²⁶

The second group of pictures in the collection consists of large full-length portraits. The figure dressed as the sultan, thought to be a portrait of Mehmed IV, and the portraits of the janissaries and a sipahi are the work of the same hand (cats. 49-51),²⁷ and the large-scale figures of women must also be by the same artist. These are copies in oil of engravings by George de la Chappelle in his aforementioned book. The garments and headdress forms comply with contemporary Ottoman women's fashions but are more magnificent. As Chappelle explains in the book, he paid particular attention to detail in these pictures, since Ottoman women had been so rarely portrayed before. The artists who copied his pictures have largely remained faithful to Chappelle's original drawings (cats. 52-60). The fact that very large paintings of Ottoman women and particularly those with Istanbul scenes in the background were made after the works of George de la Chappelle suggests various theories concerning the commission. It may be that a noblewoman commissioned these portraits of magnificently clothed and attractive women. In support of this theory is the fact that George de la Chappelle presented his pictures to Comtesse de Fiesque in France. Then the fact that the paintings of women include types from both Asia and Africa as well as the Ottoman world, and portraits of eastern couples, again suggest that they were commissioned by a female member of the Herberstein family (cats. 61-78). Recent research has revealed the fact that they were probably commissioned by Christine Crescentia Countess of Vurberk and Herbestein and date from after the 1680s.²⁸

This collection of 47 paintings was commissioned for specific purposes by various members of the Herberstein family. Both the Leslie and Herberstein families played eminent roles in the political events of this period. The countess's first husband Alexander Leslie died at the siege of Vienna in 1683. Maximilian Siegmund Count of Herberstein, whom she married two years later, and his brothers also took part in the Turkish wars. Therefore we can conclude that the family's close interest in Ottoman history and life played a part in the formation of this collection. It is natural that the family of an Austrian aristocrat who visited the Ottoman capital should have been interested in portraits of the Ottoman statesmen who figured so largely

²⁵ These pictures and those by Toorenvliet have been discussed by Polona Vidmar. See here Vidmar, p. 78-113.

²⁶ Vidmar, p. 78-113.

²⁷ Istanbul 2000, cat. 99.

²⁸ Vidmar, p. 78-113.

in the political events of the time and influenced the power balance in Europe.

The three 17th century collections discussed here reveal how in this century a more widespread and realistic Ottoman image arose in Europe. At the same time these pictures demonstrate that pictures known as *turqueries* relating to the Turks were mainly based on printed models. This once again stresses the importance of the books illustrated with engravings referred to earlier.

Another group of pictures in the collections in Europe consists of portraits of interpreters working in the Ottoman capital. From the 16th century these interpreters known as *dragoman* (a corruption of the Turkish *tercüman*) played a role as important as the ambassadors sent to Turkey, and figured prominently in international diplomacy. Official interpreters were instituted as a class in the 16th century, and at first these posts were held by Christian converts to Islam or by elite members of the Catholic community in Istanbul. Foremost among these interpreters were those who worked for *Babiâli* (the Sublime Porte, that is, the central office of the Ottoman government in Istanbul, comprising the offices of the Grand Vezir, The Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Council of State), but interpreters were also employed by European ambassadors and merchants in their negotiations.²⁹ Dragomans wore a distinctive style of Turkish dress, consisting of kaftans and caps known as *kalpak*.

The Venetian Republic decided that fluency in foreign languages was not sufficient qualification for this role, and from the 1550s began to send young Italians to Istanbul in order to learn Turkish and train as interpreters. They were called *giovani della lingua* or 'youths of language.' In 1669, at the instigation of Marseilles Chamber of Trade, France founded a school in Istanbul called *L'Ecole des Enfants de langues*.

These dragomans, who played such an important role in diplomatic relations in their Turkish costume, had portraits made of themselves in their Turkish outfits. The portraits in this exhibition depict members of the Tarsia and Carli families who served as interpreters to Venetian ambassadors. These portraits from the Porec and Koper museums in the Capodistria region acquaint us with some of the leading Italian dragomans (cats. 80-92). Christophoro Tarsia (d. 1679), who served as dragoman to the Venetian bailos for nearly 50 years, and his sons Jacobus and Thomas Tarsia were relatives of the famous baroque composer Antonio Tarsia. Jacobus received his education as a *givano della lingua* in Istanbul in the 1670s, and together with his younger brother Thomas served in the Vienna campaigns of 1683 and was also involved in preparations for the Treaty of Carlowitz in 1699 (cat. 84).

Gian Rinaldo Carli lived in the east for nearly 50 years from the 1660s until the 1720s. Notably during this time he was an influential figure in the Cretan wars that ended in the defeat of the Italians, and worked with Bailo Dona, author of the book entitled

²⁹ Istanbul 1995, pp.17-29.

Litteratura Turchesa, translating Turkish poems into Italian.³⁰ He also translated Katip Çelebi's (Hadji Khalifa as he was known in Europe) *Cihannuma* into Italian, and this book was published in Venice in 1697 under the title *Cronologia historica scritta in lingua turca, persiana et araba da...e tradotta nell'idioma italiano da Gio Rinaldo Carli nobile justinopolitano e dragomano della Serenissima Republica di Venezia*. There are full-length portraits of him and his wife Caterina Carli, both dressed in Turkish costume, in Porec Museum (cat. 90-92). All these pictures demonstrate that Europeans who visited Istanbul for various reasons had their portraits painted in Turkish dress; a fashion which was to continue in later centuries.

The pictures in the exhibition throw light on the 17th century, which was such an important time for Ottoman-European cultural encounters. The transition from an exotic imaginary image of the unknown to a more realistic portrayal of the known was undoubtedly the result of the increasing volume of written material concerning Turkey, the expansion of diplomatic relations, and the growing number of painters who visited the Ottoman Empire at this time. In particular during the second half of the 17th century the large number of illustrated books and pictures by artists who accompanied embassies to Turkey brought about the dissemination of a more true to life Turkish image. Undoubtedly this change followed a course shaped by the political events of the century. The same held for the Ottoman Empire. Just as Europeans were engaged in closer examination of Eastern culture, so the Ottomans sought more detailed information about Europe and Europeans, as demonstrated by the number of books, maps and engravings relating to Europe in Topkapı Palace.³¹ Seventeenth century Ottoman books that were the outcome of these relations include the *Travels of Evliya Çelebi* which include the countries of Europe, Katip Çelebi's *Cihannuma*, and Ebu Bekir Dimişki's translation of *Atlas Major*, all dating from the second half of the 17th century. As already mentioned, the Italian translation of *Cihannuma* by the dragoman Gian Rinaldo Carli is an example of the cultural exchange that characterised the century.

European interest in Ottoman life, and particularly the costumes of the empire, was reciprocated by figures in European costume in Ottoman palace albums, the first example appearing as early as the beginning of the 17th century.³² Ottoman miniature painters began to include western elements in their paintings. Workshops producing illustrated albums were established in Istanbul, and costume albums appeared in increasing numbers during the second half of the century, and were taken back to Europe by diplomats of the time.³³

This comprehensive exhibition uncovers a previously little known aspects of cultural relations between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century, and demonstrates how the encounter between different cultures even in a difficult political environment can create powerful syntheses in art.

³⁰ Infelise 1996, pp. 194-195.

³¹ The majority of the engravings belong to the Dutch and French schools. Topkapı Palace Museum, H. 2135, 2146.

³² There is a European figure among the various costume pictures in the album of Ahmed I (1603-1617) in Topkapı Palace Museum, B. 408.

³³ Renda 2002, pp. 1104-1105.