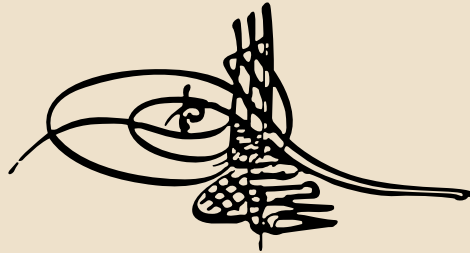


OTTOMAN EMPIRE  
AND  
EUROPEAN THEATRE

II

THE TIME OF JOSEPH HAYDN:  
FROM SULTAN MAHMUD I  
TO MAHMUD II (r.1730–1839)



edited by  
MICHAEL HÜTTLER · HANS ERNST WEIDINGER



**DON JUAN ARCHIV WIEN**

**OTTOMANIA**

**3**

Series Editors

HANS ERNST WEIDINGER · MICHAEL HÜTTLER



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## THE RECRUITMENT OF EUROPEAN EXPERTS FOR SERVICE IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1732–1808)

MEHMET ALAADDİN YALÇINKAYA (TRABZON)

The first substantial reform efforts began in the Ottoman Empire in the early eighteenth century. The policies pursued during the reign of Ahmed III (1673–1736, r.1703–1730) were determined in large part by the treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718). In fact, these treaties marked a turning point in Ottoman relations with Christian Europe and signalled a temporary end to domestic economic and political problems. The loss of territories that were considered an inseparable part of the Ottoman Empire had a profoundly negative effect on Ottoman morale. Some state officials believed that efforts directed towards saving the Empire were bound to fail. The Ottoman ruling elite and some intellectuals of the period argued that the superiority of the Europeans in certain areas should be accepted and that European practices should be adapted for Ottoman reforms. From the very beginning, Ottoman reformers were of the opinion that, with the adoption of the European military system and technology, it would be possible to repel the threat of Western encroachment on Ottoman territory.<sup>1</sup> Thus the traditionalist reform movement appeared as a synthesis of the old and the new ideas. Although this movement did not become successful to the extent it had intended, it opened the way for the radical reforms made during the reign of Mahmud II (b.1785, r.1808–1839) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The reform movements of the eighteenth century achieved limited results due to the resistance of those who believed reform would only weaken the Ottoman system. Most of the reformers never reaped the fruits of their labour and paid for their radical views with their lives. They did, however, bequeath their knowledge to the next generation and served as model for the reformers who followed them.<sup>2</sup>

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1 For the Ottoman image of the West, cf. Bernard Lewis: *Muslim Discovery of Europe*. New York: Norton, 1982. For a general study on early Ottoman modernization, cf. Fatma Müge Göçek: *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

2 For general information regarding Ottoman reform policy, cf. Kemal Çiçek: “Niçin Sürekli Reform Yapmak Gerekisini Duyuyoruz?”, in: *Yeni Türkiye* 4 (1995), pp. 50–58. – Stanford J. Shaw: *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye*, trans. Mehmet Harmancı, vol. 1. İstanbul: E. Yayınları, 1994 (orig. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1: *Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire 1280–1808*. Cambridge, 1977), pp. 307–310.

THE FIRST EUROPEAN-STYLE REFORM MOVEMENT  
IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The first European-style reform movement in Ottoman history began during the reigns of Ahmed III and Mahmud I (b.1696, r.1730–1754). Seeing the Ottoman military system and technology as ineffective in competition with the Europeans, the Ottomans believed it was a necessity to adopt their systems.<sup>3</sup> After the treaty of Karlowitz the Ottomans no longer constituted a threat to Europeans, and so restrictions ended on the European export of the raw materials needed for weapons production to the Ottoman Empire. The Protestants of Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden and other allied countries, however, began to feel the necessity of improving relations with the Ottomans. The mentality of the Crusades was waning in the Protestant world, and in the emerging competition between the ‘great powers’, cooperation with the Ottomans was considered an important political asset. The Ottoman relationship with Protestant countries such as Britain, Sweden and Prussia in the eighteenth century was replaced by good relations with Prussian Germany in the nineteenth century and with the United States in the twentieth century. Although Ahmed III did not directly determine these policies, he allowed for their implementation. After the treaty of Passarowitz the Sublime Porte abandoned its policy of expanding along the western frontiers and began to take defensive measures to prevent Austria and Russia from encroaching on Ottoman territory. The grand vizier and the sultan had already lost hope of recapturing the territories, which had been lost previously. For the first time in the Ottoman history, the ruling elite showed an interest in European politics, not with the goal of expansion but with the goal of maintaining the peace. Damad İbrahim Paşa (d.1730) was the first Ottoman grand vizier who believed that understanding Europe was important for Ottoman foreign policy and trade. He supported his position with a number of initiatives, including the establishment of regular contact with the diplomatic representatives of European countries in Istanbul.<sup>4</sup>

During the time of the Tulip Period (1718–1730) the number of diplomatic envoys and representatives sent to foreign countries increased dramatically. These envoys to Paris, Vienna, Warsaw, Poland and Russia did more than carry out diplomatic

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3 For a special study on Ottoman and Western military technology, cf. Jonathan Grant: “Rethinking the Ottoman ‘Decline’: Military Technology Diffusion in the Ottoman Empire, Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”, in: *Journal of World History* 10 (1999), pp. 179–201. – Rhoads Murphey: “The Ottoman Attitudes Towards the Adaptation of Western Technology: The Role of the Efrenci Technicians in Civil and Military Applications”, in: *Contributions à l’histoire économique et sociale de l’empire Ottoman*, ed. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont. Paris: Peeters, 1983, pp. 287–298.

4 On the foreign policy pursued by Damad İbrahim Paşa, cf. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı: *Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 4/1. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1978, pp. 147–152.

and commercial negotiations; they also began collecting information and preparing reports on the diplomacy, culture, art, agriculture, industry, and technological power of Europe. The most influential of these reports was the one prepared by Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi (c.1670–1732), who resided in Paris from 1720 to 1721. This report had an immediate effect on the reform movement, opening the first and most important breach in the Ottoman iron curtain.

The decision was made to open new consulates, not only in European capitals but also in the cities where the Ottomans had important trade relations. No longer isolating themselves from European affairs, the Ottomans sought to collect information about the innovations of European countries. At this time they also took their first steps towards integration with the West.<sup>5</sup>

The eighteenth century saw changes in the fields of politics, military tactics, trade, economy and culture occurring outside the Ottoman Empire as well. European countries experienced a great transformation at the beginning of the century, becoming more deeply involved in the process of discovery and invention and following more closely the paths of intellect and science. This elevation of consciousness in European movements and political developments during the eighteenth century was called an age of ‘enlightenment’. In France and the Protestant countries of Europe, intellectuals began to observe and study the societies and civilizations that lay outside Europe’s cultural sphere. The Ottomans benefited from this change in Europe’s perspective and slowly began to cooperate with the Europeans in some areas. At the beginning the Ottomans preferred to work with those Europeans who were converts to Islam, but eventually they treated all Europeans in the same manner.<sup>6</sup> Mutual taboos that had existed for centuries began to disappear in Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

In this period a board was established to translate cultural and scientific works, including some works of literature, from Arabic and Persian to Turkish. Because of this development, the use of Turkish dictionaries became common practice. The members of this board also translated several Western works of history, philosophy and astronomy.<sup>7</sup> This limited translation of Western works affected the world view of traditional Ottoman society. These translators, however, never became as influential as the Ottoman diplomatic envoys and representatives: Muslim Turks who met with Europeans, witnessed their power on the battlefield and worked in their capital cities.

5 There are many Turkish and foreign studies on Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed and his time in Paris. The most outstanding of these studies is Fatma Müge Göçek’s *East Encounters West*.

6 For the changes in European attitudes towards the Ottomans, as well as the changing Ottoman approach to the Europeans, cf. Donald Quataert: *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 6–11.

7 For the most important study including general information on the Tulip Period, cf. Ahmed Refik: *Lale Devri*. Istanbul: Askeri Kütüphane, 1913.