A Young Man's Fancy Turns to "Love"?: The Traveler's Eye and the Narration of Women in Ottoman Space (or The European Male 'Meets' the Ottoman Female, 16th-18th Centuries)

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Genç bir erkeğin meyli "aşk"a mı dönüşüyor? Seyyahın Gözü ve Osmanlı Mekanlarında Kadınların Anlatılışı (ya da Avrupalı Erkek Osmanlı Kadınıyla "Tanışıyor," 16-18. Yüzyıllar)

Öz ■ Bu makale erken modern dönemde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na seyahat etmiş erkekler ve onların o mekanda rastladıkları kadınları anlatışları hakkındadır. Böylesi anlatıcılar, Osmanlı memleketinin "haritasını çizme" mesailerinin bir parçası olarak değişik kadın-erkek karşılaşmaları sunarlar. Anlatı imkanlarının bazılarını örneklendirmek için, bu makale, hepsi de seyahatlerine otuz yaşından önce çıkmış üç seyyahın yazdıklarını inceler: ergenlik çağında bir Bohemya beyi olan Wenceslas Wratislaw (d. 1576), bir İngiliz taciri ve Levant Şirketi'nin bir temsilcisi olan John Sanderson (d. 1560) ve çiçeği burnunda bir Cambridge mezunu ve İngiliz arazi sahipleri sınıfından olan John B. S. Morritt (d. 1771). Makale, bu yazarların, kadınların yerlerini, kimliklerini, seslerini, davranışlarını ve ilişkilerini nasıl kurguladıklarının bir tipolojisini sunar. Ve cinsellik ve romantik macera sıklıkla Osmanlı mekanlarının Avrupalılarca temsiliyle ilişkilendirildiği için, bu makale "aşk"ın bu kurgulamalarda bir rol oynayıp oynamadığını ve –eğer oynuyorsa– nasıl oynadığını tayin etmeyi hedefliyor. Deneyimler, beklentiler, kişilik, hedef kitle ve sırdaşların var olup olmaması türünden değişkenler, bu yazarların Osmanlı kadınlarını niteleme şekillerinde rol oynar. Wratislaw onları normalleştirmeye en çok eğilimli olandır; Sanderson onları şiddet bağlamında sunmaya yatkındır; Morritt ise mektuplarının alıcısı olan kadın akrabalarını eğlendirmek için kıyafet ve kültürel âdetler üzerinde durur. Diğer seyyahlar için olduğu gibi, bu üç anlatıcının her biri için de kadın toplumsal tahlilin ayrı bir kategorisidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: seyahat, seyyahlar, kadınlar, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Türkiye, harem, kıyafet, cinsellik.

The encounter of the European traveler with the spaces and peoples of the Ottoman Empire has been the subject of considerable study in the last generation.[1] Scholars of European (particularly English) literatures have plumbed

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1 Tom Goodrich himself has been a Western traveler to "Ottoman" realms, telling his readers how to map the Ottomans and how they mapped themselves. And because Tom has been such

the depths of various genres for representations of the Ottomans and the implications of those representations for identities back home. Historians have discarded the Muslim-Christian divide as the defining element in assessments of narratives emerging from both Ottoman territories and the lands of the Christian kings. And frontier studies as a field has problematized the gauging of space and society in the transimperial zones (combining landscapes and seascapes) separating (or joining) Ottoman, Habsburg, and Venetian polities. At the same time, scholars looking at male and female gender roles in Afro-Eurasian worlds have questioned a set of long standing assumptions about the nature and limits of gendered behavior, ideology, and social convention. A significant element of all these developments is the careful assessment (and often revisiting) of the rhetorics of narrative sources, to see how exactly they 'speak' of cross-cultural interactions and the spaces in which those interactions take place. It is that very focus on the rhetoric of encounter that we wish to undertake in this essay. Moreover, our examination of three travel narratives in two centuries (spanning the early modern era) is designed to home in on one specific element of encounter, that is the meeting of the male traveler from Christian Europe with the female occupant of Ottoman domains. We are not preoccupied with the voyeuristic emphasis on the male gaze directed in peep-show fashion at the various manifestations of the Ottoman harem. Rather we are concerned with the varieties of male-female experience, and the construction of 'normal' encounters, occurring either by accident or sought out in the course of the traveler's journey. We wish to address the questions of how the authors construct women's place, identity, voice, behavior, and associations. Further, we want to see whether or not 'love' has anything to do with these constructions and, if so, how. In order to approach these tasks we have taken the narratives of three Christian males (each of whom sojourned into Ottoman space with Istanbul as an ultimate destination) and documented each instance in which they mentioned women residents in Ottoman territory.[2] Out of that

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a wonderful and generous mentor to several generations of his "juniors," across disciplines, I thought it most fitting that this essay be a collaborative effort by an established scholar and a graduate student, both interested in the ways in which the "walls" between regions and cultures can be breached (P.B.).

2 Our travelers sometimes lack the kind of specificity one would wish for when reconstructing itineraries (especially when the narrative derives from letters as it does for Morritt). See for maps of the cities, regions, and routes of travel in the empire at this time, Donald Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), maps 13-14, 26, 29; and Paul Magocsi, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 47, 59, 63, 76.

process of listing, we hope here to glean some insights into early modern typologies of Ottoman women and the ways in which they were told.

The Protagonists:

The three narrators considered here, Wenceslas Wratislaw, John Sanderson, and John B. S. Morritt all sojourned to Ottoman lands as young men, before the age of thirty, and in the case of Wratislaw, son of a Habsburg knight, before the age of twenty. Though sharing English citizenship, Sanderson and Morritt derived from very different backgrounds: Sanderson from the tradesman class, and Morritt (trained at Cambridge) from the landholding class. Each of these witnesses traveled to the imperial domains for a different reason. But each one brought a certain sense of wonder to his stories of "the Turk;" and in the course of his commentary each one drew the females he encountered into his written assessment of Ottoman society. These are our protagonists, their biographies suggesting the contexts out of which their authorial personalities were formed. This essay will feature, in particular, the encounters of Wratislaw, whose account is the most expansive of the three.

Wenceslas Wratislaw of Mitrowitz was born in 1576, the son of a Bohemian knight in what is now the Czech Republic. The young Wenceslas was made a squire at the age of fifteen and entrusted to the care of Frederic Kregwitz, who was sent to the Ottoman court of Murad III (r. 1574-1595) by the Habsburg emperor Rudolph II (r. 1576-1612). The embassy set out for Istanbul in 1591, traveling down the Danube and then heading overland. Once in the Ottoman capital, Wratislaw spent time exploring the city and occasionally getting into trouble when he and his friends failed to respect Ottoman customs. Kregwitz took his guardian responsibilities seriously, disciplining and even beating the young Wenceslas when he felt he had breached the boundaries of propriety or put the objectives of the embassy at risk. When relations between the Habsburgs and Ottomans turned sour in 1593, Wenceslas and the rest of the imperial delegation were arrested. He was imprisoned for three years, suffered considerable deprivation, and seems to have served some time in the Ottoman galleys before being released in 1596. Following his return to Bohemia, Wratislaw wrote a book, about his travels and imprisonment, in 1599 when he was twenty-three years old. The German version of his narrative was not published until 1786; and an English translation was published in 1862 by one of his de-

scendants.[3] Wratislaw apparently married, fought on the Hungarian front, and became a provincial judge; he died in 1635.[4]

As a member of the imperial embassy, Wenceslas Wratislaw had the opportunity to observe Ottoman soldiery, as well as the royal court. The young Bohemian was impressed by the pomp of Ottoman ceremonies. He also noted the differences in appearance and religion among Ottomans and European Christians, commenting upon the social functions of conversion from Christianity to Islam, religious renegades, and the Christian origin of much of the janissary corps. He was a particular admirer of Ottoman hospitals that offered shelter and food to Muslims, Christians, and Jews alike. Once in Istanbul, Wratislaw observed the political power struggles between vizirs and pashas, who manipulated foreigners like pawns. And he worked at learning Turkish. In his free time, Wenceslas and his friends roamed the streets (often with a janissary guard), catching glimpses of daily life and amusing themselves in the many gardens around the city. In this way he witnessed public punishments, markets, and people going to the baths, paying particular attention to the games and activities of the young and masculine. It was in this context of roving about the city that Wenceslas gained most of his knowledge about Muslim and Christian women in the city, both from reports he heard and from his own observations.

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3 The German version is: Václav Vratislav z Mitrovic, *Des Freyherrn von Wratislaw merkwürdige Gesandtschaftsreise von Wien nach Konstantinopel: so gut als aus dem Englischen übersetzt* (Leipzig: Schönfeldschen Buchhandlung, 1786). The translation used in this essay is Wenceslas Wratislaw, *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislaw: What He Saw in Constantinople, in his Captivity, Committed to Writing in 1599*, Albert Henry Wratislaw, trans. (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862). Several Czech versions have been published, among them: Václav Vratislav z Mitrovic, *Prīhody Václava Vratislava z Mitrovic, které on v tureckém hlavnīm meste Konstantinopoli videl, v zajetī svém zakusil a po stastném do vlasti navrácenī sám Léta Páne 1599 sepsal*, Alois Bejblīk, ed., Edice Klasické cestopisy 7 (Prague: MF, 1977). For background on the Czech literary milieu in Wratislaw's time see James Naughton, University Lecturer at Oxford, "Czech and Slovak Literature Resources: Renaissance and Humanism," http://users.ox.ac.uk/~tayl0010/lit_renais.htm.

4 We found surprisingly little verifiable biographical information available on Wratislaw beyond that provided in his travel account. His translator Albert Henry Wratislaw provides nothing further in his English edition. A thorough exploration of Czech sources might no doubt prove more revealing (but a preliminary search of sources on Czech literature did not). For a discussion of Wratislaw as an observer of Islam, see Natalio Ohanna, "Entre Musulmanes, Renegados e Indios: Narrativas Españolas de Convivencia en Tierras Extranjeras," Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University (2009), 45, 96-7.

Wratislaw's narrative was also very much colored by his experiences as a prisoner of the Ottomans. He frequently referenced forced conversions and slavery, as well as harsh punishments for criminals. During his years as a prisoner, he was keenly aware of the small details that could make life unbearable: heat, exhaustion, bugs, illness, and beatings or dismemberment. He also noted those small comforts that could be found in prison: friendship with other prisoners, a chance to work outside in the fresh air, taking up a craft like knitting to earn a small income and fill the hours, and getting the rare glimpse of Ottoman women when working on construction projects. Like other elite prisoners, his time of incarceration was not devoid of opportunities to communicate, obtain news of outside events, or gain access to certain privileges. Understandably, Wenceslas's portrayal of the Ottomans was shaped by those terrible years as a prisoner. As he describes his release from captivity and voyage home, the reader can sense both his eagerness to flee Ottoman territory and the fear that his situation could change again for the worse at any moment. Nonetheless, it is not a harsh and jaundiced view of Ottoman society that Wratislaw crafted for his readers when he returned home. Rather it is the narrative of a keen observer, still young and interested in exploring the possibilities of all that he saw.

John Sanderson was born in London in 1560. The eldest son of haberdasher Thomas Sanderson (d. 1579), he was a sickly child, and throughout his life exhibited "a peevish and resentful disposition."[5] He attended St. Paul's School in London where he says he experienced great misery "by reason of my unaptness."[6] Then he served as his father's assistant until being apprenticed to the draper merchant Martin Calthorpe for a nine-year period in 1578. After six years, Calthorpe, ignoring the terms of Sanderson's apprenticeship, bound him to England's "Turkey Company" for four years. Sanderson soon set sail for the Levant, arriving in Istanbul in March of 1585, and moving on to Egypt later that year. Over the next eighteen months, in addition to his work, Sanderson twice toured the pyramids, visited several Egyptian cities, and survived a shipwreck near Rosetta. After a stopover in Syria, he returned to England in 1588. Once back in Europe, Sanderson was finally able to gain his freedom from his indentures. His independence was further guaranteed by the death of his old master, Martin Calthorpe. Around this time, he fell in love with Calthorpe's niece, Margaret, in Norfolk. Owing to his lack of

5 John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584-1602, with his Autobiography and Selections from his Correspondence,* William Forster, ed. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), x.

6 Sanderson, *The Travels*, 2.

money, however, the couple was not allowed to marry, and Sanderson was soon back in London. A short time later, he took part in the first English mercantile attempt to reach the East Indies via the Cape of Good Hope. Sanderson once again sailed for Istanbul, in 1591. Still acting as a merchant, he also worked for England's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Edward Barton. He remained in Istanbul for the next five years before returning once more to London; but, by 1599, he was back in Istanbul. Before returning home, he visited the Holy Land, joining a company of Jews bound for Jerusalem, and taking in Biblical sites such as Bethlehem and Hebron. By 1605 Sanderson had left the Levant Company, although he continued to make a living as a moneylender and mortgager. He never married, and had no children. He had connections to the Draper's Company in London and was a member of the Court of Assistants from 1618 until his death in 1627 at the age of sixty-seven.[7] Sanderson's *Sundrie the personall voyages performed by Iohn Sanderson ... begun ... 1584. Ended in ... 1602, With an historicall description of Constantinople* was included in Samuel Purchas's *Pilgrimes* (1625).[8] His travels in the Levant are also recounted in his autobiography and in personal letters, which were collectively published with his travel narrative in 1931.

Istanbul was a true cosmopolitan city in Sanderson's eyes, teeming with merchants, travelers, doctors, ambassadors, soldiers, Jews, Christians, Germans, Greeks, Englishmen, Venetians, Turks, and others. Quite often in his writings he dwelt upon the antagonisms that arose from this hodgepodge of cultures. He also noted the many times that he was involved in drunken brawls. Sanderson's observations about life in Istanbul range from the mundane to the sensational. At times he recorded whose house he stayed in, or what European merchant had recently arrived in the city. Indeed, he often relayed news about the diverse European communities in Istanbul to his friends and colleagues in Europe. At other times he relayed bits of news and gossip about the movements of the sultan and his court, Ottoman armies, palace intrigues, janissary uprisings, and public punishments of criminals, both male and female. In Egypt, Sanderson had the chance to play tourist, visiting the pyramids, venturing up the Nile, and seeing giraffes and hippos. In his typically disgruntled manner, he complained about being mistaken for a Jew (he was, at the time, traveling with Jews); and he distrusted the Orthodox priests,

7 All biographical information here is taken from, Sanderson, *The Travels*, x-xxii, xxv-xl.

8 John Sanderson, "Sundrie the personall voyages performed by Iohn Sanderson ... begun ... 1584. Ended in ... 1602. With an historicall description of Constantinople," in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (London: 1625), v. 2, bk. 9, 1614-1640.

Catholic friars, and Turkish guards who showed him around Jerusalem. Indeed, Sanderson frequently characterized the people he encountered by their religion, followed by either their career or physical appearance. He was quick to judge, and although he sometimes found surprisingly kind things to say about people, his narratives as published suggest that on the whole he was rather surly and prone to blaming others for his troubles. As for education, Sanderson's was of the rough and ready, experience-based kind, rather than the elite formal educations enjoyed by our other two travelers. That discrepancy is apparent in their divergent styles of narrative and in the ways in which Wratislaw and Morritt (as opposed to Sanderson) invoked history and classical authorities.

John B. S. Morritt, born in Cawood, Yorkshire, in 1771, was the eldest son of Ann and John Sawrey Morritt. As a youth he attended grammar school in Manchester, followed by a period of time spent in Paris. On his father's death in 1791, the younger John inherited the family estate of Rokeby Park, along with a "considerable fortune besides."[9] Morritt received a B. A. from St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1794. Shortly afterwards, in February 1794, he and his tutor and friend Robert Stockdale set out on a tour of Europe and Asia Minor. Morritt's travels over the next three years took him through Austria, Hungary, Turkey, Greece, and Italy; joined by his friend James Dalloway, he visited noble courts and numerous classical ruins. His journey is recorded in the letters that he wrote home to his mother Ann, his aunt Frances, and his sister Anne (which were not published until 1914). And that particularly female audience is a notable element of his narrative, as are his frequent comparisons of the places he witnessed to places in England with which his correspondents were familiar. In 1796, having successfully avoided Napoleon's armies, which were marching south into Italy, Morritt returned home to Rokeby Park. With him he brought a large collection of antiquities gathered on his journey. After receiving his M. A. from Cambridge in 1798, he settled down to the life of a country squire and soon became involved in local politics. Morritt married Katharine Stanley (d. 1815) of Lancashire in 1803. They had no children. His interest in travel and antiquities lasted his entire life, although he only left England once (for a brief visit to France) after his early grand tour. He was a member of the Society of Dilettanti and founder of the Travellers' Club. He published a number of short political texts, as well as a work in support of the Greek poet Homer's history of Troy; but the letters narrating his travels

9 John B. S. Morritt, *The Letters of John B. S. Morritt of Rokeby: Descriptive of Journeys in Europe and Asia Minor in the Years 1794-1796,* G. E. Marindin, ed., (London: John Murray, 1914), v.

to Ottoman domains were not published until well after his death, at the age of 71, in 1843.[10]

Morritt was a young man of twenty-two, just out of college, when he set out abroad in 1794. His letters home about his travels through Eastern Europe and Ottoman lands exhibit the excitement of an educated youth seeing the subjects of his classical studies brought to life before his eyes. Morritt also had an eye for the beauty of the varied landscapes through which he and his companions passed, admiring an Aeolian hillside bathed in the light of a Mediterranean sunset, or the striking juxtaposition of magnificent architecture and fine gardens in Istanbul. Although he downplayed the dangers of his journey (frequently reassuring his mother and aunt that they need not worry about his safety on Ottoman roads), the reader does get occasional hints of unrest, particularly in the border regions where Ottoman and Habsburg suzerainty were relatively tenuous. In these regions, Morritt allowed the reader glimpses of bandits, pirates, thieves, rebellious subjects, and religious dissenters or at least rumors thereof. For his sister, Anne, he described his attendance at grand balls and feasts. While he displayed a distinct preference for English culture, he respected, and often admired, the diverse cultures he encountered, paying particular attention to language and dress. He sympathized with the plight of Ottoman women; and like many early modern, European visitors to the eastern Mediterranean (and perhaps as a function of his classical training), he described Greek women as particularly beautiful. But he also admired their intelligence and displays of independence.

A Typology of Encounter:

Travel narratives (especially those targeting an audience back home that was consumed with curiosity about the Ottoman Empire in general and its females in particular) exercise a varying degree of selectivity in determining which parts of the journey are worthy of retelling. Some travelers focus on strategic interests, others on commerce, others on comfort or sociability. We have little means, unless the author tells us himself (and perhaps not even then), of knowing what degree of selectivity has been applied to the final

10 Morritt, *The Letters*, v-vii; and Anita McConnell, "Morrett, John Bacon Sawrey (1771-1843): Traveller and Classical Scholar," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), online ed., May 2006, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19333. See also Florence Anne Sellar MacCunn, "J. B. S. Morritt of Rokeby" in MacCunn, *Sir Walter Scott's Friends* (London: John Lane Company, 1910), 310-323.

product. But given what the author provides we can trace out a universe of possibilities for the male-female encounter in Ottoman space. That list of possibilities is, of course, affected by a set of factors that condition the narratives. Each of our travelers had a different motivation and context for travel (respectively a long-term embassy, commercial activity, and a journey of discovery for adventure and the study of antiquities and culture). Each has a different authorial voice and intended audience.[11] Another important element in the narration of space is the complex and layered web of references available to the authors for "telling" this particular empire, place, and culture. Each of our authors had some access, apparently, to earlier texts: the histories, reports, and imagery of the Ottomans and their "classical" antecedents in Eurasian territory. Each one represented, in one form or another, a nation that defined its commercial and strategic interests as intertwined with those of the Ottomans. Wratislaw and Morritt, highly educated young men in relatively elite social positions, had been reading the Ottomans and their realms in the natural course of their educations. Morritt, additionally, writing from the perspective of eighteenth century England, was tracing a path of youthful exploration and study already prescribed for a segment of men of his class. He expected his audience at home to have at hand the knowledge, narratives, and maps that would enable them to follow and share in his journey as they read his letters. The experiences of Wratislaw and Sanderson, travelling in the late sixteenth century, were significantly more unique for young men in their respective classes.[12] And Sanderson, unlike the other two, reflecting his lack of more advanced education, seems to have a less developed matrix of tropes, references, and authorities on which to draw when he tells his journey, its

11 On the vagaries of personality and style, see for example, Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Ross Ballester, *Fabulous Orients: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Matthew Dimmock, "The Tudor Experience of Islam," 49-62, in *A Companion to Tudor Literature*, edited by Kent Cartwright (Malden, MA, and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); and Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis, eds., *Under Eastern eyes: a comparative introduction to East European travel writing on Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008).

12 See Rhoads Murphey, "Bigots or Informed Observers? A Periodization of Pre-Colonial English and European Writing on the Middle East," (review of Brandon H. Beck, *From the Rising of the Sun: English Images of the Ottoman Empire to 1715*; Anita Damiani, *Enlightened Observers: British Travellers to the Near East 1715-1850*; Jonathan Haynes, *The Humanist as Traveler: George Sandys' Relation of a Journey Begun An. Dom.1610*; and Reinhold Schiffer, *Turkey Romanticized: Images of the Turks in Early 19th-Century English Travel Literature)*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110.2 (Apr.-Jun., 1990): 291-303.

peoples, and the sovereign entity that claimed the landscapes and seascapes through which he traveled. The sense his story conveys may thus be a bit more raw, unprocessed, or job-oriented (he is the only one of the three whose entry into Ottoman space was for purposes of work), although he does periodically highlight classical and Biblical history, especially when he journeys to the Holy Land.[13] Sanderson also, like Wratislaw, periodically included transliterations of spoken Turkish in his text, suggesting that he had at least some rudimentary knowledge of the language.

These travelers followed a set of standard routes that linked the capitals of Europe to Constantinople. Having once entered the Mediterranean, for example, Sanderson's journey was quite similar to the seaborne journey of Nicolas de Nicolay, a scholar attached to the French embassy to Istanbul in 1551 who is well known for his textual and pictorial representations of Ottoman women. For Nicolay, Tripoli seemed to be the place where he passed decisively into Ottoman space, a place of "divers Turkes and renegade Christians." [14] For Sanderson that role was played by Algiers.[15] Nicolay saw Zante in the Ionian Sea as a place of mixed identity, caught between the imperial ambitions of "Turk" and Venetian.[16] For Sanderson, it was just one more landing place among the maritime stepping stones to Constantinople, a place about which he recorded nothing of his impressions. Wratislaw and Morritt both traveled by the overland routes from Vienna to the Ottoman capital. But Wratislaw's party took advantage of the expansive channels of the Danube to make their way to Belgrade before setting off overland. Morritt's party, apparently seeking a more venturesome pathway from Vienna, headed east into Transylvania, Wallachia, Romania, and Bulgaria before rejoining the more direct route at Adrianople. Morritt and his companions seem to enter Ottoman space around Bucharest (where they hired two janissaries). And Morritt wrote to his sister, "You will see by your map that very soon afterwards we left Transylvania, and entered Turkish domains."[17] Our discussion of encounter is thus conditioned by the diverse pathways undertaken by our narrators, and

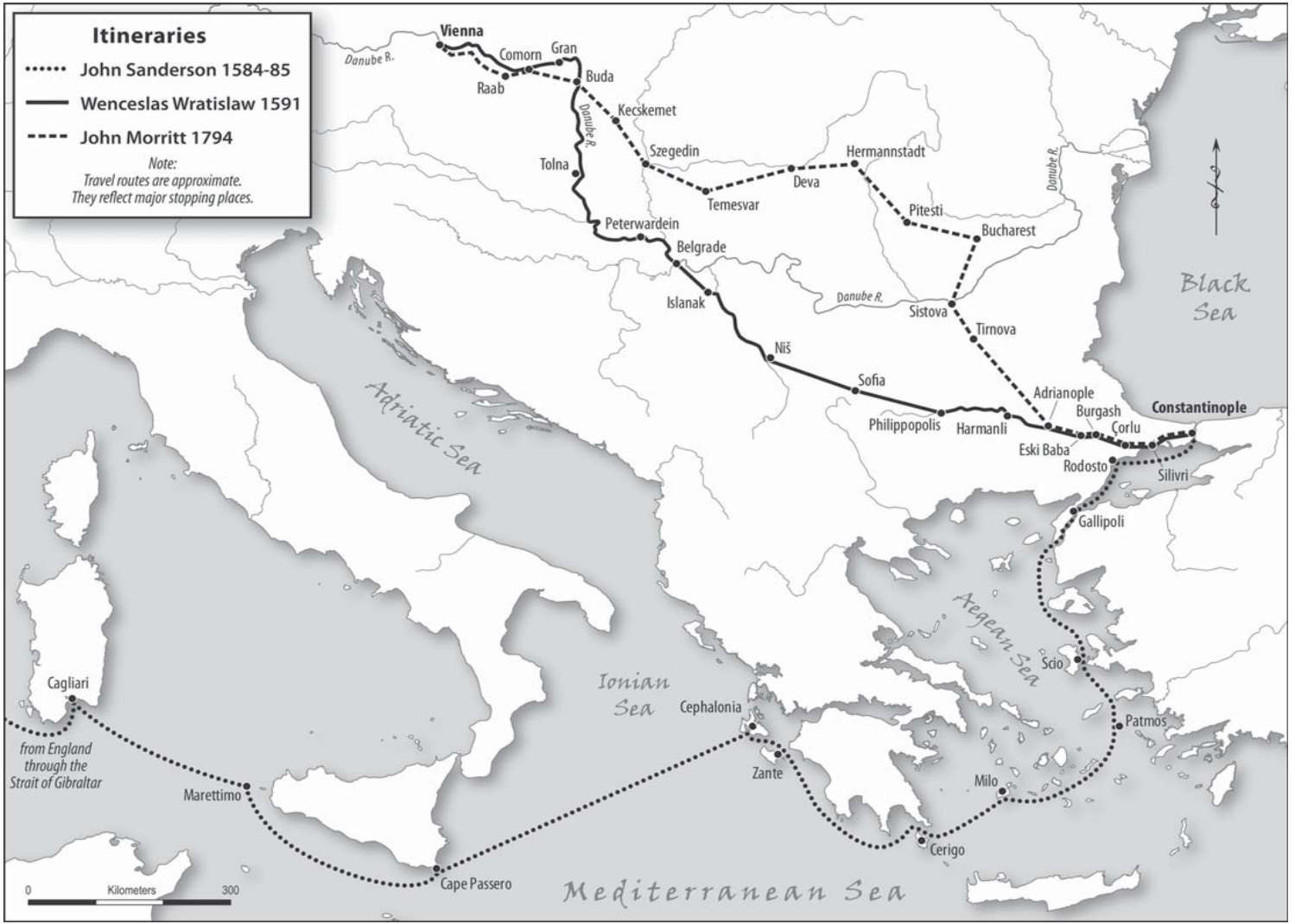
13 Sanderson, *The Travels*, 37, 41, 46, 96-98, 103, 110, 112-113. References are, for example, to Helen of Troy, Cleopatra, and the tombs of Biblical women that he saw on his journey.

14 Nicolas De Nicolay, *The Nauigations into Turkie*, T. Washington the younger, trans. (London: Thomas Dawson, 1585; reprint Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1968), 19v.

15 Nicolay, *The Nauigations*, 18-20. On Nicolay's contribution to English cartographic knowledge, see E.G.R. Taylor, *Tudor Geography 1485-1583* (New York: Octagon Books, 1968), 59-60.

16 Nicolay, 31r.

17 Morritt, 60-61.


Itineraries
John Sanderson 1584-85
Wenceslas Wratislaw 1591
John Morritt 1794
Note:
Travel routes are approximate.
They reflect major stopping places.
Vienna
Danube R.
Comorn
Gran
Raab
Buda
Danube R.
Kecskemet
Tolna
Szegedin
Hermannstadt
Deva
Temesvar
Danube R.
Pitesti
Bucharest
Peterwardein
Belgrade
Islanak
Danube R.
Sistova
Tirnova
Black Sea
Niš
Sofia
Adrianople
Burgash
Constantinople
Philippopolis
Harmanli
Corlu
Eski Baba
Rodosto
Silivri
Gallipoli
Adriatic Sea
Aegean Sea
Scio
Ionian Sea
Cephalonia
Patmos
Cagliari
from England
through the
Strait of Gibraltar
Zante
Milo
Marettimo
Cerigo
Cape Passero
Mediterranean Sea
0
Kilometers
300

by the amount of attention they directed at certain parts of their journeys. To aid in the visualization of those journeys we have included here a map that roughly traces the routes taken to Istanbul by the three travelers.[18]

Given notions of monolithic blocks of Christendom and Islam on the one hand, and the flexible and evolving nature of identities in the broad frontier zone separating London and Vienna from Ottoman space, it is worth noting here specifically what we mean by the "Ottoman female." We employ this designation for any female the narrator encountered once he had entered space he designated as Ottoman (or "Turk"). Essentially, the Ottoman female is a person who is subject to the reach of Ottoman administration, regardless of her communal affiliation. Among our three narrators, Wratislaw provides the most expansive picture of her. His narration may be divided into two main types of vision of the Ottoman female: those deriving from actually seeing or meeting females, and more general statements about "Turks," "Bulgarians," or "Muslims," for example, which convey cultural habits, and derive (presumably) from information he has read or heard from informants. The distinction between these two types of "witnessing" is not always a clear one; so, for example, when Wratislaw describes the elaborate costumes of the Bulgarian village women and the smug "satisfaction" with which they "walk…amongst strange people," he is (apparently) both repeating the tropes of past narrators like the Habsburg ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, and detailing some of the things he has himself seen.[19] There is a third type of presentation of women which takes the form of a lengthy once-upon-a-time narrative (described below), that the author characterizes as a "story," and uses to illustrate the nature of Muslim-Christian and sovereign-subject relations.

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18 The exact trajectory of the routes as reflected in the sources is not always absolutely clear; and our map suggests a more direct path between significant stopping places than was actually a fact given the topography of the land and the logistics of travel. Also, the places where our travelers stopped were designated by a variety of names in a variety of languages. We have preserved for the most part the designations the travelers themselves employed (the rather mixed-looking result is an apt reflection of the naming and mapping conventions of the time).

19 Wratislaw, 37; Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq: Imperial Ambassador at Constantinople 1554-1562,* Edward Forster, trans. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 22, 26, was originally published a decade before Wratislaw's departure. Busbecq wrote extensively about the empire under Süleiman the Lawgiver (1520-1566) having served in the Ottoman Empire between 1554 and 1562. Costume descriptions were common fare in travel narratives; so what Wratislaw actually saw with his own eyes is impossible to pin down. See for example Stephan Gerlach, *Türkiye Günluğü 1573-1576*, Kemal Beydilli, ed., v. 1 (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007), 74.

The instances in which Wratislaw details direct encounters with women include: seeing Bulgarian village women selling bread and other comestibles to the ambassadorial entourage as it journeys from Buda; witnessing women (of various ages) in the streets and markets of Istanbul; meeting the "cook" and "concubine" of a German goldsmith in Galata whose hospitality the young man and his friends enjoyed; conversing with veiled "Turkish ladies," after a meeting in a garden had been arranged by his janissary; experiencing the "melancholy sight" of women, old and young, including Christian captives, in the Istanbul slave market; and seeing the "Turkish woman" for whom a renegade in the Habsburg entourage had forsaken his wife, a "young court lady" in Prague.[20] Wratislaw's accounts of women at second or third hand include news and rumors about prominent palace women; comments on the treatment received by a fellow prisoner at the hands of a pasha's wives; and (most particularly) lessons in (and stories of) cultural conventions from his janissary minders. We do not know if this citing of janissaries as authorities for female behavior is a literary device on Wratislaw's part. But it is not difficult to believe that such companions over time regaled the enthusiastic young man with stories of life and legend in Constantinople. And because the stories of Wratislaw's principle janissary companion, Mustapha, are full of familiar tropes (like that of the young bride tricking her aged husband in order to have sex with her lover) we can view both Mustapha and Wratislaw as participants in a long chain of narratives (that transcends time, space, and commune) about the life and nature of the human female.[21]

Sanderson was a very different kind of narrator than Wratislaw and one who spoke more of the violent side of life among the merchant communities in Istanbul. But there were certainly similarities in the ways in which he narrated the Ottoman female. As suggested by his correspondence, because Sanderson was plugged into the English diplomatic community through his Levant Company activities, like Wratislaw he was purview to reports (and

20 Wratislaw, 36-37, 72-73, 76, 79-80, 97-98, 101, 110.

21 Wratislaw, 99-100. Mustapha claimed to have various lady friends, and made himself the protagonist in one such adulterous scenario. Wratislaw notes that Mustapha took compassion on him and tried to protect him when he was arrested (121). The story chain continues after the author's death, of course, with A.H. Wratislaw, the editor and translator of this 1862 English edition, noting earlier Czech and German editions of the manuscript dating from 1777 and 1807 (vi). And we are acutely conscious of the effects that these various layers of translation (of both culture and story) may have on the narrative product that we ourselves ultimately see and use.

rumors) about the activities of palace elites.[22] Thus he commented on the engagement of Safiye Sultan in political affairs, noted the marriages of certain pashas, and remarked on the slaughter of Mehmed III's brothers (or the dead sultan's pregnant concubines) when Mehmed came to the throne in 1595.[23] He also commented occasionally on law and custom. For example, he informed his audience that when the sultan returned from campaign "it is lawefull for all their women, both smaule and great, to meet him without the waules [walls]; at other times the women of any accompt or creditt never come in multitudes emongest the men."[24]

Like Wratislaw, Sanderson portrayed palace women as patrons and political actors; he shows the valide sultan endowing buildings, giving gifts, and freeing prisoners.[25] But he also provides a glimpse of the seamier side of women's life in Istanbul. Striking in this regard are his references to the trade in prostitutes in Pera, in which he (along with various English commercial and diplomatic personnel) was a participant.[26] In a supplementary population list that Sanderson wrote, he provides a "count" of the different kinds of residents in Constantinople. First come various types of Ottoman officials, then talleys for: "Other Turks (besides women and children);…Christians of all sorts and countries;…Jues, in and near about the city;…[and] Women and children of all sorts, Christians, Jues, Turks, etc."[27] This classification spells out female difference. Women are a separate class of people. But interestingly, among the

22 On that English diplomatic and merchant community during the time that Sanderson was in Istanbul, see Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), who comments on many of the English personnel found in Sanderson's travel account and correspondence; and *The Ottoman Empire and early modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 192-226, for discussions of European trading companies, ambassadors, and missionaries in Ottoman territory, including visitors to Jerusalem.

23 Sanderson, 58, 74, 130, 141-142, 184.

24 Sanderson, 60. On the public personas of royal women, see Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 186-218; and on women "going out," see Kate Fleet and Ebru Boyar, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 207-208.

25 Sanderson, 184-185, 203-204.

26 Sanderson, 10, 13. On prostitution in Istanbul at a somewhat later date, see Fariba Zarinebaf, *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul 1700-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 86-111; and "The Role of Women in the Urban Economy of Istanbul, 1700-1850," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60 (Fall, 2001): 141-152.

27 Sanderson, 82-83.

classes of Ottomans (like falconers and sipahis) noted in the first part of the list, Sanderson also counts "Whores of all sorts, at least 1000." For him these women are notable elements of the cityscape, grouped with neither Turks, nor Christians, nor Jews, nor women. Beyond the whores, one rarely sees the run-of-the-mill female in Sanderson's account. Two exceptions are that he claims to have seen seven adulteresses one morning bound up in sacks and thrown in the sea, something he describes as "their usual punishment."[28] And, when he sojourned to Cairo, Sanderson remarked particularly and with some disgust that women (along with men) of the Cairo crowd sought anxiously to kiss the hands and arms of holy men, both an ancient pilgrim who had returned from the hajj, and a filthy and naked "saint," who made his way about the city.[29]

Finally, for John Morritt, the typology of Ottoman women is comprised of statements about female beauty, culture, and comparability. Corresponding with his female relatives, he routinely writes in a gay and sometimes humorous fashion on dress, accessories, and the social realms of (mostly elite) women. His is an eye-witness presentation colored by things he has read, heard, and been told by "Grecian and Frank ladies" in Pera, among other informants.[30] Greek "beauties" are everywhere as Morritt travels through the archipelago; and he takes pains to comment on their dress, and on how it might vary from the expectations of gentlewomen of his acquaintance in England. The customs of the "Greeks" he compares both to those of the "Turks" and to those of ancient times as described in the classical literature. Like Wratislaw, Morritt also comments on women from whom he has received hospitality when visiting the homes of locals. As he progressed on his journey he fit the various places and their people into a cultural hierarchy based on their women, their social mores, and their civility. He suggested, for example, that Albanians, though Christian, lacked "civilization," citing the barbarous act of a young man who, in a fit of jealousy, slew another with a sabre.[31] It was not so much the slaying that offended Morritt but the fact that it was carried out before the horrified eyes of the victim's mother. Maina, in the Peloponnese, on the other

28 Sanderson, 87. The author goes on to suggest that the "Queene Mother," was unhappy about such cruelty and had the eunuch Hasan Pasha executed for it "and other actions." A note in Purchas, according to this edition, claimed that the valide sultan "….advised the eunuch Bassa that her sonne had left him to governe the citie and not to devoure the women…"

29 Sanderson, 45-46. The elderly haji had his only functioning eye plucked out while in Mecca, "because he would see no more sinne."

30 Morritt, 79.

31 Morritt, 256.

hand, was "a half civilized nation," where men and women were both armed, and a lady had been known to shoot a man if he "made too free" either with her person or reputation.[32] And Morritt characterized the isle of Zante, off the coast of the Morea, as a place whose "society" was "some steps above Turkey, and many behind other countries."[33] That ranking he linked to the status of their women, writing to his aunt:

> You would not be able to live there, for the ladies are more closely confined than even in many places of Turkey, except those of the lower order. I supposed this owing to the remains of Oriental manners, but was more surprised when I heard the reason…. if a lady had the misfortune to attract notice she would very probably be run away with by force, even from her own house, as bravoes may be hired here to commit every sort of enormity, and all offences are connived at by bribing the governor.[34]

While Morritt, like Wratislaw, thus comments on his interpretations of customs and law, his vision of society is rather more simple than the young Bohemian's, providing the surface details of looks and dress without Wratislaw's more elaborate attention to social complexities. He may be more conversant with those complexities than many of his stories suggest, but his solicitude for his female audience would seem to slant his narration in certain predictable directions, despite his regard for his correspondents' education and acuity. Like Sanderson, Morritt does raise the ubiquitous trope of Ottoman women tied in sacks and thrown into the sea, but in his telling the act is removed from the more direct and brutal reality of Sanderson's narrative.[35]

Our travelers identified Ottoman females based on a set of categories of identification, principally: location; age; status as virgin, matron, sultana or prostitute; occupation; ethno-linguistic associations (including religion); as well as dress, looks, behavior, and sociability. In many instances, only one or two of these categories are employed in any given identification. In others, multiple categories were addressed. The most important category of all, however, was gender. Males were the default denizens of Ottoman lands.

32 Morritt, 205.

33 Morritt, 249.

34 Morritt, 249.

35 Morritt, 86, "We coasted along the Asiatic shore on account of the wind and current, and were shown near Chalcedon the rock from which ladies were from time to time thrown into the sea in sacks on particular occasions, such as running away from their husbands or masters, infidelity, particularly for favours shown to a Christian, in which case also their lover is impaled."

Females received a separate narrative treatment. Something that one ordinarily does not see in these accounts is a real sense of individual personhood imparted to the females encountered. They tend rather to be described as types. Very few of them are named; and the closest one comes to a sense of real familiarity is when the traveler is entertained in a house where a woman serves him food. Sociability should also not be read as sexuality although it can be in some instances, particularly in Morritt's descriptions of female beauty. With Sanderson's prostitutes, of course, a certain form of sexuality is taken for granted.

Narrating the Ottoman Female (Some Examples):

Because he was resident in an ambassadorial household, it is not surprising that Wratislaw was apprised of various reports about the machinations of the sultanas. Palace women, in Wratislaw's account, are not the subjects of sexual speculation; they are political actors, patrons, and consumers. Thus he relates that when "My lord our ambassador," was seeking intelligence on Ottoman intentions regarding Hungary, he obtained it (via bribes and presents) from both the palace ağas and the "Sultana." The former used an "old woman" to transmit the information to Kregwitz, and the latter used "a Jewess."[36] Wratislaw in no way seems to find this use of women as intermediaries, by palace elites, remarkable. The correspondence, however, landed the ambassador in hot water when the grand vezir, Sinan Pasha, accused him of spying and seized documents from his residence. The effects of this discovery were moderated, however, because Sinan found that the "sultana herself" was implicated and he did not wish to "fall into disfavor" with the wife and mother of the sultan," who "ruled everything, and did what they liked." Wratislaw concludes the tale by saying that Sinan ultimately "made little noise about it."[37]

36 Wratislaw, 102-103. Wratislaw also reports that Sinan Pasha himself bribed "the emperor's wife and mother," on his return from the Hungarian front, with goods valued at 100,000 ducats (173). The author (or his translator) betrays some confusion regarding which "sultana" is which here. He refers to the protagonist in both these bribery scenarios as the "emperor's mother" and the "sultana." But according to Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 94, Murat III's mother Nurbanu, the valide sultan, died in 1583. His chief concubine, Safiye Sultan, afterwards served the functions of both "wife," (apparently she and the sultan were not legally married) and mother, acting as a cherished advisor, and procuring female slaves for his bed. Wratislaw may also be confusing the dates; the first bribes seem to have been paid in 1593 while Sinan Pasha's seems to date to 1595, the year in which Mehmet III became sultan and Safiye became valide sultan.

37 Wratislaw, 116.

Most of these remarks on the occupants of the imperial harem are relatively cursory, but Wratislaw does present three episodes in which he shows the sultanas in a rather more dramatic light and places words in their mouths. The first episode is one in which the "sister" of the sultan, hearing that her son had been killed on the Croatian frontier in 1593, "ran to the emperor, with disheveled hair, as though frantic, and, falling at his feet, demanded vengeance on the Christians."[38] The second episode depicts the valide sultan, distressed that a favored German goldsmith, "a very good craftsman," who "used to do all that she wanted," had been imprisoned for espionage; "she immediately ordered him to be released" but "the poor man had [already] been hung on the hook."[39] A final scene, depicts the "empress," Safiye, now the valide sultan, arguing against the necessity of her son, the new sultan Mehmet III (1595-1603), marching into battle:

> …. relying upon the Alcoran, which ordains that no new sultan, when he ascends the imperial throne, shall be obliged to go to war for the space of three years. She, therefore, bade Synan [Sinan] and the soldiers to be content, counseling rather that Synan, and other old experienced commanders, should march into Hungary. It was their duty, she said, to protect their lord and his land; indeed, what good would their office be if they could not slay the giaours without the Sultan's presence? In that case, did they deserve the dignity with which they were for that purpose invested by the Sultan?[40]

Wratislaw thus takes for granted, and conveys to his audience, the "voice" and power of the sultanas. He concludes this passage on the valide's speech by noting that Sinan Pasha was shortly thereafter struck down with dysentery; and he repeats the rumor: "that the Sultana corrupted Synan the vizier's physician by bribes and splendid presents, so that he had something administered to him, and died in eight days."[41]

Beyond these royal women, Wratislaw mentions encounters with villagers, and visions of women in the homes and streets of Istanbul. While this adolescent observer was keen to make his own judgments about female beauty, as he was eager to learn many things about Ottoman society, his tone tends more to treating women as a normal element of society rather than as a set

38 Wratislaw, 104.

39 Wratislaw, 172.

40 Wratislaw, 176. For context on this dispute, see Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 111-112.

41 Ibid.

of exotic beings sharing little in the way of similarities with their European counterparts. In Wratislaw's Istanbul, Ottoman women lean from windows to observe what is going on in the street; they purchase food, ride in carriages, and walk through the streets to the bath houses. In more sheltered domestic sites they cook and tend to their men, and (according to his janissary) they contrive to meet their lovers when their families and social conventions prevent them from doing so openly.

During his extended stay in the Ottoman capital, Wratislaw seems to have learned elements of law and social convention from a variety of informants. He is particularly interested in how these factors affect Christians in Ottoman lands but his curiosity is not confined to those of his own faith. His inclination to seek out cultural knowledge is illustrated, for example, by his comments on marriage. Speaking of a German Christian resident of Galata with whom he was acquainted he noted that:

> in order for permission to be given him to marry, after the Turkish form, he must make application before the cadi, or judge, and pay well for it. In obtaining such permission the following custom is observed: — the person who desires to take a wife comes with her before the judge, declares his name and hers, and must declare before him what he is willing to give as her alimony, should he divorce her, and what furniture and goods she brings to him; all which the cadi orders to be entered in a book. Should he be unwilling to cohabit with her any longer, he pays her the alimony, and restores her goods, and she must depart. She may then take another husband, and he another wife. If they have had children, the husband is bound to maintain and provide for them.[42]

In another segment of his narrative Wratislaw gives a lengthy account of "Turk" marriage, detailed down to the marching order of the bridal party and the number and type of candles employed. He begins the story by repeating the notion that custom requires that the bridegroom cannot lay eyes on his intended before the ceremony. But he qualifies that remark by adding that customs are changing. Then the formal business of marriage ensues.

> If she pleases him, negotiations are carried on about her with her parents and friends, and should they be willing to give her to him, a certain day is appointed, when he declares the amount of the dower with which he endows her, and gives her various presents, and she, too, must say how much she brings him. All these

42 Wratislaw, 79-80.

> things are inscribed in a book before the cadi, or judge. When the wedding-day comes, the bridegroom previously sends a number of camels and mules, in proportion to the wealth of the bride, for her moveables and goods. All that she brings him is placed upon them, and carried to his house, covered with handsome carpets, and, should the families be wealthy, in red chests. When all is ready the bridegroom provides a wedding-feast, or breakfast, for his friends of the male sex in some other house, and for the women in his own, or that of his father. After breakfast the bridegroom and his friends mount their horses, the women seat themselves in carriages, and a handsome, gay-coloured ambling jennet is sent for the bride, the mane of which is plaited with gold …. and a splendid procession is formed to fetch the bride …. Then, after a little confectionary has been eaten, and some sherbet drunk, the bride's father takes her right hand, places it in that of the bridegroom, and bids him to be kind to her. Upon this the four young men hasten up, a fifth brings the jennet, the trumpeters blow their trumpets, the music plays, and the bride seats herself astride on the saddle …. Her nurse, or the female servant for whom she entertains most affection, rides on a horse after her …. Very large wax candles, like altar-tapers, adorned with diverse beautiful flowers, gilt and painted, six in number, more or less, are also carried before the bride. The bridegroom rides with his male friends and those of the bride in front, the bride in the midst, and the women in a line behind her, with great joy and triumph, and making their horses curvet merrily to the bridegroom's house. On arriving there he assists her from her horse, leaves her with his female friends, and rides away again among his male friends.[43]

In some instances Wratislaw identified his informants when he made such observations. Often enough, though, he did not, suggesting that he may have seen such a ceremony. It is also possible that he sought out textual authorities on things Ottoman once he found himself back home. But given his long stay in the capital and his numerous acquaintances there, Wratislaw certainly had the opportunity to witness a bridal procession and to accumulate many stories about Ottoman customs.

Indeed stories are one of the modes by which Wratislaw conveys a sense of Ottoman space to his readers. His account of the marriage procession is woven into an intricate story of a lecherous çavuş and a Greek virgin that Wratislaw inserts into his narrative. He tells the tale to generate sympathy for a Christian population at the mercy of arbitrary Ottoman officials. But the account also serves to highlight Ottoman laws and customs, and the sympathy of the Istanbul public for the plight of young lovers. The lovers were the handsome

43 Wratislaw, 87-89.

son and daughter of Greek, Galata merchants, betrothed and ready to marry. But fate intervened. On her way to the bath the bride, "not dreaming of any approaching misfortune, not only did not veil her face, but, like a young girl, stared in all directions." Just at that moment she was espied by a "grey haired," eighty-year-old çavuş riding from the palace. The rest, as they say, is history. The girl's admirer tried to force her father to consent to a marriage and, failing that, obtained permission from the court, "to marry a Christian." [44] He then had the girl's parents imprisoned until she consented to have him and convert to Islam. The marriage quickly took place; and when the girl's fiancé returned from a wine-buying trip to Candia, he was horrified to learn of her condition. But the star-crossed lovers contrived to exchange letters and meet secretly in a garden setting evocative of the frame story of the *Thousand and One Nights*.[45] Her husband was soon apprised of the deceit, arranged to catch the lovers in the act, and had them sentenced to death, she by drowning and he hung upon hooks.[46] Full of pathos, wrenching speeches, and rejected possibilities for a reprieve, the tale extends over several pages. But what is interesting for our purposes is the ways in which the young Wratislaw weaves this tragic story into the account of his own "carefree life" in Istanbul, his visits to gardens, and his understanding of Ottoman conventions of authority and sociability. The borders between fantasy and social reality, as in most such travel accounts, are blurred. But when Wratislaw speaks of red wedding chests, the wine of Candia, or the compassionate person who put the fiancé out of his misery with a well placed shot on the third night of his impalement, the realities embedded in the complex layers of story are quite evident.[47]

Dispensing with this element of story, Wratislaw also regales his readers with an account of 'actually' seeing the faces of some Ottoman damsels. He and his companions urged their janissary, Mustapha, to introduce them to "some handsome Turkish woman."[48] They sought out this opportunity, he says, on the condition that they would not expose themselves to any danger, thus they were not so daring as the cheated fiancé in the previous story. Mustapha and some janissary companions did supposedly persuade five or six Ottoman women to speak to the young men (in a garden), and even, reluctantly,

44 Wratislaw, 85-87.

45 The meeting place is, of course, a garden. See *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, Robert Mack, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 2-4.

46 Wratislaw, 92-97.

47 Wratislaw, 88, 97.

48 Wratislaw, 97-98.

to lower their veils. But Wratislaw, with his usual candor, admits to being unimpressed with the result; he found the ladies, all "brown, and black-eyed" with "dyed hair and eye-brows," not the least bit beautiful. [49] We have no idea whom these "ladies" were, what were their ages (or even if the encounter actually took place). But there is a certain innocence about the whole story. Its lack of drama and aura of normalcy incline one to believe that perhaps the janissary and his friends managed to wheedle or coerce some women into a somewhat awkward meeting with the foreign males, who might have been as much an object of curiosity to the women as the women were to Wratislaw and his friends.

John Sanderson, acting as an agent for the English Levant Company, provides a rather different take on Ottoman women. Although the sultan has "his women," and the English consul at Algiers has his "whore" named Diana, "love" plays no role in Sanderson's description of his travels. In fact, he gives no indication of any particular interest in women other than noting his sense of entitlement concerning the unattainable Ms. Calthorpe back home.[50] Violence, however, was a recurrent theme in Sanderson's characterization of Ottoman space, and it was a characterization that included women along with men. Beyond the trade in prostitutes and the drowning of adulteresses mentioned above, Sanderson also commented at some length on the execution of the Jewess, Esperanza Malchi. Malchi is a well known example of the female intermediaries mentioned by Wratislaw. She served as *kira*, an agent of Safiye, the valide sultan, facilitating her dealings with the world outside the harem. Her wealth and power had drawn the animosity of various factions in the court and military; and she was brutally killed in the course of a sipahi rebellion in the capital in 1600.[51] Sanderson recounted the details.

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49 Ibid. For more on the female encounter and the possibility of conversation, see Palmira Brummett, "The 'What If?' of the Ottoman Female: Authority, Ethnography, Sexuality, Conversation," in *The Ottoman Woman: a Comparative Perspective*, Kate Fleet and Ebru Boyar, eds., in preparation.

50 Sanderson, 8, 24. See Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, "The Gendered City," 877-894, in *The city in the Islamic world*, Salma Khadra Jayyusi, Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli, and André Raymond, eds., v.1 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 886.

51 See Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 225-226, 242. Peirce notes that the sipahi rebels who killed the *kira* were unhappy, among other reasons, because of the debased currency with which they were paid, blaming the debasement on Malchi's son who was in charge of the custom house. See also, Eva Holmberg, "Esthers in the Seraglio: Jewish Women in Early Modern English Travel Narratives on Turkey," 34-56, in *The Trouble with Ribs: Women, Men and Gender in Early Modern*

> Yet can I not lett passe to relate that a Juishe woman of the greatest credett and welth in Constantinople, was brought out of hir house and stabbed to death in the Viseroys yeard; thence, by a window in the Serraglio wall, where the Grand Signior, Sultan Mahomet, stood to see, shee was drawne with ropes to the publiquest place in the citie, and ther betweene a peramide pillor erected by Theodotiouse and the brazen tripled serpent, laid for the doggs to eate …. Hir head had bine caried uppon a pike throughe the citie, and alike hir shamefull part; also many smaule peces of hir fleshe, which the Turks, janesaries, and others caried aboute tied in a little packethred, shewinge to the Jewes and others, and in dirision said: Behould the whores fleshe. One slice of hir I did so see passe by our house in Galata. Hir eldest sonn in like manner the next day [was] cruelly stabbed and murthered... dragged thence, and laid by his mother; but was so fatt and ranke that the doggs would not sieze uppon him …. Hir second sonn became Turke to save his life... the third sonn, a younge youth, their wrath beinge appeased, they permitted to live. This was an acte of the Spahies, in spight of the Great Turkes mother; for by the hands of this Jewe woman she toke all hir bribes, and hir [Malchi's] sonns weare Chefe Customers [customs officers] of Constantinople who toke all the gainefull business into their owne hands, doing what they lusted. The mother and childerin weare wourth millians, which all went into the Great Turkes cofers.[52]

One cannot help thinking here that Sanderson has enjoyed heaping on the gruesome details of the *kira*'s death, although such details were commonplace in both tales of the "Turk" and popular entertainments of the time. Malchi had been an important point of contact with the palace. Indeed in a letter dated November 1599, Sanderson wrote that on a day he was dining at the English ambassador, Henry Lello's, residence, a letter from the valide sultan along with a present intended for the English queen had arrived. They were delivered by the "Bustangi Bassi" (*bostancı başı*). But the *kira* also personally delivered another letter from Safiye Sultan, along with a letter and a rich present of diamonds and rubies "from herself," also to be delivered to the queen.[53] This episode suggests not only that Safiye sent both "public" and private letters to Elizabeth, but also that the *kira* might be presuming to feather her own nest and usurp the perquisites of the sultana. Given her level of influence and the high position held by her son, it is little wonder

Europe, Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences 2, Anu Korhonen and Kate Lowe, eds. (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies 2007): 43-46, 49.

52 Sanderson, 85-86.

53 Sanderson, 185; and Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*, 224-228.

that they became the objects of jealousy and violence when the sipahis took the law into their own hands. Sanderson for his part seemed little concerned, rather cynically calling the murder of the *kira*, the "Jews' *mala pasqua*" as it happened on the Jewish Sabbath, on Easter eve.[54] In a letter dated 30 March 1600, in which he reported both rebellion and murder, he notes that: the sultan "delivered" the *kira* and her son into the hands of the rebels, and that the Jews did not dare to venture from their homes "for some that do are cruelly beaten and have their garments taken from them."[55] By June 7, things had calmed down; Sanderson wrote to a correspondent in England that the Jews had begun again to "lift up their heads," and trade at the port, but that the death of the *kira* was still "not yett out of speech."[56] Malchi in this passage stands as a representative of her nation and its place in Istanbul. Her wealth and influence made her a target.

Where Sanderson's accounts were not calculated to please a gentlewomanly audience, the letters of his countryman John Morritt seem intended to do just that. They compare the mores of women of various ethno-national groups, and wax poetic on women's visibility, dress, and veiling. Commenting on the palaces of the sultan's sisters, Morritt notes that the apartments of their husbands are small and "as plain as possible….for when a subject here marries a lady of the blood-royal this is always the etiquette, and she remains quite the head of the house."[57] He did not personally, of course, see these royal women; but he did lay claim to more direct experience of some of the women of Istanbul.

> [The Greek] women are the only ones who here have any liberty, the Armenians being almost as strict with their wives as the Turks. All you see of either when you meet them in the streets is their eyes and nose, a handkerchief being tied round their heads as high [as], or sometimes over, their nose, and another covering their forehead and eyebrows. Their whole person is muffled in a long cloth gown made very loose, the shape almost of a nun's in a Roman Catholic country …. When the Turkish women are permitted to go out you see them in great parties in boats and the walks about, often amusing themselves like children with escarpolettes or merry-go-rounds, but always totally secluded from the society of men; nor

54 Sanderson, 201.

55 Ibid.

56 Sanderson, 204.

57 Morritt, 80-81. Like the Ottoman traveler, Evliya Çelebi, *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman*, Robert Dankoff, ed. and trans. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 259-261, Morritt commented on the great expense incurred by husbands of royal women.

> would a Turk pay the least attention, or speak even to his wife, if he met her in the street.[58]

Needless to say the "Turkish" women are not quite as secluded as Morritt suggests or else he would not have "seen" them on their excursions. However, as the above suggests, Morritt's attentions do not dwell upon the "Turkish" female, largely because he felt that they were constrained to an eternal childhood within Muslim society. In general Morritt does not speak of the run-of-the-mill female in the market place as Wratislaw does, though he does speak routinely of women out and about in the towns and villages through which he and his companions pass on their journey.[59]

The childlike "Turkish" women, for Morritt, stand in stark contrast to various Christian women he encounters who seem to have semi-autonomous positions in society, playing the role of hostess, and even serving as head of household. Morritt enjoys the hospitality of several such households, including the "country seat" of a Wallachian noblewoman, presumably Christian (but not identified as such), who followed various "Turkish" customs.

> The gentleman of the house was at Bucharest, and we were received by his lady. She was seated on a low board sofa which filled the whole of one side of the room, surrounded by five or six Greek slaves in great state. As this was the first specimen I saw of the Greek dress of which you have heard so much, I will describe you hers. Her gown was long-sleeved, coming up before no higher than her cestus, which was tied à la Campbell. It was gathered round her ankles and legs like trousers, and was made of a spotted light muslin. On her head she wore a flat-topped high cap with a gold tassel on the top, and a shawl handkerchief round her forehead, her hair hanging loose about her shoulders. Over her gown she wore a long light blue silk pelisse edged with fur, with half-sleeves; on her feet she had thin yellow-leather boots, with slippers, which she left at the side of the sofa to put up her feet, for they all sit cross-legged, à la Turque. Over her bosom she wore a thin fold of muslin which fastened under her cestus; and I assure you, though not of the première juenesse, it is difficult to imagine a more elegant figure…
>
> We had not dined, and she sent into the village for everything we wanted which she had not in the house, and after dinner two servants walked round with a basin

58 Morritt, 79.

59 Morritt, 37, 51, 108-109, 230.

> and a pitcher, to pour water on our hands. She had a little child about four years old with her, with whom we made a great friendship. She also showed us a little boy of about a year older, whom she had bought of the Turkish soldiers during the last war with the Austrians, and after supper and a little conversation through means of an interpreter, she left us in peaceable possession of the sofa, on which we slept very luxuriously …. [we] left the house delighted with the novelty of the scene and the hospitality we had experienced.[60]

Morritt, like many travelers, gauged the sites he visited by the comfort and diversion provided. This instance of being entertained by a woman without her husband present is perhaps a bit unusual, but not unheard of. And what is perhaps more interesting is the woman's purchase of the little captive from "Turkish soldiers," an exchange that neither she nor Morritt seem to think particularly remarkable. Dress, furniture, customs, and even captives were shared across communal boundaries in this outlying region of the Ottoman domains.

Morritt points out that same kind of cultural syncretism again in Candia, where the "Turks:"

> …. live and eat with Christians without any scruple, almost all drink as much wine as they can get, and their women, instead of being in prison or muffled up, walk about with the same dress and freedom as the Greeks... the Agas we saw even made an open joke of the prohibition of wine, and were not more scrupulous in talking about their women, a subject on which a real Turk is as silent as a Chartreux.[61]

Of course "living and eating" with Christians was perhaps a more common occurrence for "Turks" than Morritt may have thought, as Wratislaw suggested for Istanbul. And wine drinking among Muslims was, by the accounts of merchants and travelers since the Middle Ages, not strictly limited to regions where the wine was as famous as that of Candia. As for veiling and seclusion, all of our narrators speak of it. Nonetheless, it is clear that access to women for the foreign male was a highly variable thing. And as for how men among themselves might talk about their women, that too, one suspects, may be a subject not yet fully elucidated in our narratives.

60 Morritt, 62-63.

61 Morritt, 231. Presumably the "Chartreux" reference is to Carthusian monks.

Conclusion, On Love and Sexuality:

One can argue that neither "love" nor sexual voyeurism had much to do with many of the encounters that male travelers narrated for the time that they were traversing Ottoman space. The female, instead, was a particular element of the Ottoman landscape, an object to be viewed, explored, assessed, and plugged into the universe of narratives and myths of Ottoman society. She was then measured against the female protagonists of earlier narratives and against the women known and experienced by the traveler at home (or in his other travels). Needless to say she was not a primary focus in a constellation of encounters that were designed, experienced, and narrated by men and (predominantly) for men.[62] But neither was she incidental. She was indeed an object of curiosity, in part because cultural conventions and the nature of a traveler's business (and associations) made her much less accessible than her male counterparts. But she was clearly present in both the viewed and imagined space, and certainly not limited to the domestic sphere. That said, none of our travelers describe themselves as seeking out Ottoman women for sexual purposes, despite Wratislaw's commentary on the possibilities for such intercourse among Ottoman subjects and foreigners (and Sanderson's associations with the 'sale' of prostitutes). Rather, at least in what they were willing to record for their readers, the travelers (through first and second-hand description) 'witnessed' female circumstances in order to place Ottoman women into a framework of cultural types. They wanted both to inform and entertain their audiences (and to relieve them of their misconceptions, much as Lady Mary Wortley Montague attempted in a much more systematic fashion in her famous letters from Constantinople).[63] The female, for all of our narrators (despite Wratislaw's cultural openness and Morritt's female correspondents) remained a separate category of being. Her gender identity transcended those of ethnicity, religion, and even class --- so that, in general, she was the subject of digressions rather than part of the narrative flow. There are exceptions to this general characterization. Indeed, at certain points in the narratives, particularly those of Wratislaw, one sees women (old, young, village, city) as everyday citizens, and parts of the travel experience by which one encounters

62 Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2, has argued that women's agency is "effaced" in the historiography on such encounters. But we see this complex of representations as having more possibilities.

63 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-1967).

people in passing. But when particular attention is devoted to narrating the female, she is ordinarily the object of 'special' attention, an occasion for more elaborate description that plays upon the reader's expectations and provides an enhanced visuality to the scene. 'Love,' honest or illicit, is the stuff of story time, a form of narration that combines knowledge, experience, myth, and entertainment. It is not something dwelt upon by our travelers, at least not in the retelling.

A Young Man's Fancy Turns to "Love"?: The Traveler's Eye and the Narration of Women in Ottoman Space (or The European Male 'Meets' the Ottoman Female, 16th-18th Centuries)

Abstract ■ This essay focuses on early modern European male travelers to the Ottoman Empire and their narration of the females they encounter within that space. Such narrators present a variety of male-female encounters as part of their 'mapping' of Ottoman domains. In order to illustrate some of the narrative possibilities the essay examines the accounts of three travelers, all of whom set out on their journeys before the age of thirty: Wenceslas Wratislaw (b. 1576) an adolescent Bohemian squire; John Sanderson (b. 1560) an English merchant and agent of the British Levant Company; and John B. S. Morritt (b. 1771), a recent Cambridge graduate and member of the English landed class. It presents a typology of how these authors construct women's place, identity, voice, behavior, and associations. And because sexuality and romance have often been associated with European representations of Ottoman space, it assesses whether or not 'love' plays a role in these constructions and, if so, how. Experiences, expectations, personality, audience, and exposure to confidants all play a role in the ways in which these narrators characterize Ottoman women. Wratislaw is most inclined to normalize them, Sanderson to present them in contexts of violence, and Morritt to focus on dress and cultural mores to entertain the female relatives to whom his letters are addressed. For each of these narrators, as for other travelers, the female is a separate category of societal analysis.

Key words: travel, travelers, women, Ottoman Empire, Turkey, harem, dress, sexuality.