

## Subjects in between: three different way of translating experience by Italian travelers in late 17<sup>th</sup> - early 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman space

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# Subjects in between: three different way of translating experience by Italian travelers in late 17<sup>th</sup> - early 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman space

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Hence I pray my discreet reader not to doubt what I will be saying in this volume, when I say I saw it with my own eyes; and not to pay attention to the chatter of those who believe that the whole World is contained within the space they can see with their own eyes; and mistrust that others may have seen those Countries where they are too afraid to go, even in their own imagination.<sup>1</sup>

- 1 With these proud words, Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri opened the second part of his work, the *Giro del Mondo (Voyage Round the World)*. Here is the pride of the experience that is speaking. And these words also testify how, between the late 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Italian travelers contributed in building a new awareness of different worlds for those within European society. In their role as cultural mediators,<sup>2</sup> the development by these travelers of a tolerant attitude towards what was perceived different from a cultural and religious point of view influenced, more specifically, the Italian society between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this regard, personal experience in knowing and defining the Self and the Other played an important role in bringing about this change of attitude. As Paul Hazard was the first to suggest, the shift toward first-hand knowledge could be considered the source of the Oriental fascination which was so prominent during the Enlightenment. According to Hazard, the *crise* of the European conscience began by questioning the authority on which scholastic methods had been based, and this played a key role in the complex and multifaceted evolution of a more critical European society.<sup>3</sup>

- 2 Hazard understood the three-four decades of European history between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries as a period particularly full of contradictions, weaving between values of the past and stimuli for ideological innovation. The re-discussion of the principles governing authority, which in any case still subsisted, coexisted with an new idea of society founded on natural law; an ambivalence which would lead to the background of uncertainty where we can find the origin of the Enlightenment mentality. This is indeed what Hazard highlighted, namely how a mental transition occurred before the political and economical one.
- 3 Going beyond this initial statement, Hazard's theory provides us with a useful framework within which to examine the ambiguous attitude of European cultures towards what they perceived as different. Examining the ideas of the period presented in translated texts, we can trace a very contradictory movement that led from sheer hostility (the crusades) to fascination, while often these two approaches and attitudes are present in the same places and at the same time.

## Moving Knowledge. The traveler and the experience as epistemological tool

- 4 Experience, then, has a full and crucial epistemological role in the re-elaboration of judgments of Otherness that could be based on prejudicial knowledge of cultural diversity. With experience here we mean the process of developing knowledge from the active practice of the object that is going to be known. This is direct knowledge, personally acquired, of a particular sphere of reality.<sup>4</sup> Far from pretending to assume as too rigid and sharp the passage from prejudice to first-hand knowledge in discovering a "new" and "positive" Otherness, by now widely investigated by both historians and social anthropologists,<sup>5</sup> we would like first to emphasize that the new approach to Otherness was not induced by a more rational way of looking at the world, but was mostly the result of experience, that is, of real encounters with the Other. For this reason, trying to find even a hint of a structured theory of diversity in the travel literature of the period would fail, for the process was not driven by a pre-defined and explicit idea about, for instance, tolerance and appreciation of diversity, often underestimating the extent of cultural differences. Rather, we should say that by being in contact with real people, the Europeans –as diplomats, merchants, missionaries or simply travelers<sup>6</sup>– were forced to elaborate their own responses in order to maintain a workable relationship with the "real" non-Europeans with whom they had to share the same ordinary environment.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, we would like to notice the importance that the travelers under investigation attributed themselves to personal experience. The opening quotation of this article by Gemelli Careri is an example of the irreplaceable value that physical experience played in the eyes of our analyzed subjects. But the other three, Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, Luigi Ferdinando Marsili and Giuseppe Sorio, also appreciated being eye witnesses. The selection of these four authors was made on the basis of two different criteria, i.e. geographical origin and education. Regarding the former, they cover different areas of the Italian peninsula: two of them were born in the Venetian Republic, one in the Papal State and one in the Kingdom of Naples. As the distribution covers much of the Italian peninsula, we can have access to a variety of perspectives given by the different political configurations. Regarding the latter, it was our intention to study how individuals of high educational level, therefore in principle

confident about their own cultural identity, reacted towards a strongly alien cultural environment. People of such a profile often played the role of cultural mediators, due to a series of variables such as being cultivated, having a higher degree of sensitiveness, and, finally, being more likely to write a book.

- 5 The value of the knowledge brought by moving far from one's place of origin and the desire for wonder were already present in European culture, as well as travel accounts. However, our aim is to point out how, in the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, travelers and travel accounts reached a new dimension both as cultural mediators and in their impact on the society of origin. A new dimension that was also stimulated by two material factors that highly developed in the analyzed period, i.e. the overall increase in human travel by sea and the expansion of the printed book market. For the first, the development of new sailing methods made possible cheapest and fastest connections, increasing the numbers of people that could afford the opportunity to move far from their homes in search of a new perspective on the world.<sup>8</sup> For the second aspect, the last two decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century represented an important turning point for the peninsula which experienced for the first time a real explosion in the circulation of information.<sup>9</sup> Venice was the main place for cheap print production intended for wide circulation, as a consequence of the transformation in its traditional printing activity and the evolution of the printing market. While no longer selling products of high quality characteristic of previous years, the impact of the new printers on society was much greater, contributing to the shaping of a proto-public opinion.<sup>10</sup> The new audience, attentive to current events, became familiar with the printed sheet and the reader was no longer satisfied with generic information. He tended to place the news in a historical frame and to want verification of the truth of the claims that were being made.<sup>11</sup>
- 6 We can add then a third factor, given by a military and political event: the second siege of Vienna in 1683. It represented a modern breakthrough in the distribution of information, because, for the first time, an event triggered the need for news consumption which was required to be fast and constantly updated.<sup>12</sup> News from faraway places, which shifted the focus onto distant objects, also created the conditions for another type of production. Although Ottoman history and culture had been always intriguing for Europeans, beyond Vienna we find a major increase in the number of accounts on Ottoman subjects that, even though were intended as easy-reading, provide fairly accurate knowledge of the culture of the other.<sup>13</sup> As the second siege of Vienna represented an important turning point in the dialectic of power between the Habsburgs and the Porte, it carried along an inversion in the cultural and mental attitude of the West towards the Ottomans and their culture. It is interesting to notice the gradual but constant shift from the triumphant reaction to victory in Vienna (observable in public ceremonies, publications and, in general, the dissemination of the news tout court) to a genuine attraction for Ottoman "topics" also in the Catholic Empire that fought against the sultan.<sup>14</sup> The texts that give voice to the new editorial trend and the attraction of exotic topics for the audience are highly diverse phenomena and of a great variety. For instance, there are the *avvisi*, as analyzed by Infelise,<sup>15</sup> that follow the gazettes that started to be widely popular in conjunction with public interest in the movements of the two imperial armies of the two imperial armies. Another type of text production are diplomatic dispatches, a traditional product of the Italian peninsula, following the well-established practice of the Venetian Republic.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, we may draw attention to the spreading of the presence of the Turk in theatre plays in Italy, France and Habsburg Empire.

- 7 At any rate, it was the act of writing itself that made the travelers to achieve the role of cultural mediators. The very process of reporting personal experiences through the act of writing carried a deep meaning. Displaced in a new world, the travelers needed to redefine themselves, in order to give significance not only to the present situation, but also to their existence as individuals.<sup>17</sup> They were re-shaped by experiencing other cultures and, even though they often did not fully understand how deep this internal process was, they reached an awareness of the pedagogic value of their evidence.<sup>18</sup> Moreover they were members of distinct and separate communities with peculiar identity of their own,<sup>19</sup> a different and international society, based on their very status as travelers. Their cultural origin made them different: they were strangers to the people they encountered while travelling, whilst at the same time their experiences set them apart from the individuals in the society at home.
- 8 Italian travelers from the age of the hazardian *crise* displayed a very interesting and peculiar mindset, elaborated with great originality in their journals, at the core of which was often the ultimate (as declared by the authors<sup>20</sup>) aim to give information and “educate” others in the experience of Otherness. Albeit with some exceptions, before and after this moment, other elements prevailed to outline the travelers’ mentality. Before, throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Italians had tended to regard travel as an opportunity to confirm their cultural background, rather than as a dialectical confrontation with what was distant,<sup>21</sup> while after, during the “enlightened” 18<sup>th</sup> century, the anecdotal knowledge of travelers often provided empirical support to justify the intervention of European states in the policies of the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary states.<sup>22</sup>

## Translating the Experience. The process of the elaboration of the narrative of the Otherness

- 9 The translation of different encountered realities made by the Italian authors of the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was usually done following two different options, i.e. the description through similitude and through difference. These two approaches were expressions of the same concept, a different way of representing the Turks that was departing from the second-hand stereotypes and making the Ottomans culturally closer in the readers’ perception. Similitude allowed the description of the culture of the Other in parallel with the European one. In my opinion, this should be seen as a strong attempt to normalize the “Turks”, rather than as a symptom of the inability of the authors to assign meaning to what lay outside their original cultural environment. By outlining the similarities between Turks and Europeans, such descriptions not only hinted at the proximity of the two cultures, but also at the intrinsic legitimacy of the Ottoman world.
- 10 On the other hand, the emphasis on diversity gives to diversity itself its own value within another culture. Through such accounts, the Turks were seen not as barbarians, but as people with a value system, albeit a different one.<sup>23</sup> Through this process, the emerging sense of the authors’ real experiences of a different environment was powerfully conveyed.

- 11 The impact of the cultural translation operated by the travelers on the society of origin led finally to a different way for early modern Italian subjects to perceive cultural and social differences.<sup>24</sup> While, for the travelers, it is obvious that this new perception was highly influenced by the personality and the mental flexibility of each individual, nevertheless we can easily trace a common *esprit de l'époque*, shared by all of them in approaching diversity. The public circulation of their thoughts was then the step that led eventually those Italians who remained at home to become aware of these attitudes. We can reasonably argue that the publishing success of these works represent an acknowledgment of the approval given by the readers to the travelers. We agree with Paul Hazard on the hypothesis that travel accounts brought fascination also where there was no direct experience of the Orient, playing an important part in the development of a new perception of the world as a container of wonder and plurality.<sup>25</sup>
- 12 Within this genre, which was greatly expanding at a very swift pace, travel accounts were written in a multitude of ways, some wildly different from others. Writers could choose to use a personal or impersonal register; they could adopt the style of diary, letter, autobiography or just plain description. Of course, such choices were influenced by the personal disposition of the author, his personality and could also be determined by the intended audience. In this regard, we will see how some accounts remained unpublished for a long time, and were only circulated in narrow, usually upper-middle class, social circles, wherein the interest in the new cultural climate which was affecting Europe was much higher.<sup>26</sup> Far from wanting to get into the epistemological debate whether or not these forms of writing that translate the Other constitute a literary genre in its own right,<sup>27</sup> we just want to point out how the way these texts were elaborated was very wide and varied, allowing its different “sub-forms” to trespass one into the other.
- 13 Among them, we can identify three main ways adopted by the authors in making their personal experiences public. In our opinion, the method that each author chose was deeply linked to his particular experiences in the places that he visited, how he valued them, what role these experiences were accorded in his life and it seems to us that the more positive the experience had been for the author, the more he would try to purify his narration of contradictory elements, as the literary followed the psychological in the normalization of Otherness.

## The Impersonal Narration: the Guide

- 14 We can note a tendency towards impersonal and neutral narration, in cases where the author took a strongly pedagogical approach to narration. Such a traveler considered his experience as a useful tool for “educating” the others. The experience here was perceived as having a positive general role, as leading to knowledge. But in such cases, the real experience tended to lose its personal value as something unique, becoming repeatable and universally experienceable.<sup>28</sup>
- 15 This is the case of Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, the little-known author of an account of Istanbul, first printed in Venice in 1684. The *Historia o' sia vero e distinto ragguaglio sullo stato presente della città di Costantinopoli* <sup>29</sup> (*History, or true, and distinct account of the present state of the city of Constantinople, and the menagerie of sultanas, with the rites of the Turks, and greatness of the Ottoman Empire*) was printed by Leonardo Pittoni, one of the small publishers of Venice in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible that the author

and the publisher were related, as the Pittonis's management of the *stamperia* was family-based.<sup>30</sup>

- 16 According to the survey of the Venetian press of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, this was the only text which Giovanni Pietro wrote with certainty.<sup>31</sup> The fact that it was reprinted twice by Leonardo Pittoni, in a very short period of time, clearly shows that the subject was attractive, especially if we consider the short lifespan of a cheap print book.<sup>32</sup> The only information we currently have about the author is derived from the printer's introduction. According to it, Giovanni Pietro was affected by what Leonardo called "a longing to investigate the things of this wide world, although most remote and difficult".<sup>33</sup> In order to satisfy that longing, he travelled far from home "without regard for the convenience of homeland and the changes of fortune [...] by launching himself upon stormy oceans and wandering far and rough regions".<sup>34</sup> Giovanni Pietro would eventually travel to Asia, across a large part of Africa and would come to know Europe in great detail. Maybe it is for this reason that he was known only by name, in the Venetian publishing scene, as he spent most of his life travelling outside the city. We can reasonably assume that Leonardo proposed to Giovanni Pietro that he should write a small paper in order to capitalize on the surge of interest in Istanbul, which was the symbol of the Ottoman Empire, in the wake of the events at Vienna.
- 17 In his introduction, Leonardo stressed the importance of knowledge based on first-hand observations. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that first-hand observation was meant to enable readers to acquire true knowledge without leaving their home and country. Efficiency and convenience were, however, for the benefit of the "eyes of curious minds", an interesting statement that emphasizes the care of the printer in characterizing the potential recipients of its product through the element of intellectual curiosity. Furthermore this "dedication" can also testify the real orientation of the readers' preference for travel narrative of the period, stressing the need of Otherness of the public.<sup>35</sup> Although this was undeniably an easily readable text, aimed at a non-specialist public, it would be a mistake to dismiss the information it provided as superficial or generic. This is clear in the section *On the Muslim religion*, usually one of the topics most affected by prejudicial narrative. In the section *About the Ritual, and Mohammedan Law in general*, the author displays an extensive knowledge of Islam, not only as regards its formal aspects but also in terms of the fundamental differences between the worship practices of the Sunnis and the Shiites. He liked to incorporate parallelism into his travel reports, and he employed this device throughout the text as a whole: for instance, he made reference to "Lutherans" among the Muslims.
- 18 Furthermore, he framed all his description by saying that Islam had Ten Commandments. Those Ten Commandments fell within the Islamic-Christian and Jewish tradition, and for the convenience of us who study the book today, they can be divided into four subgroups, according to their degree of similarity to the Catholic religion.
- 19 The first subgroup relied on Mosaic Law, and we find in it the most important commandment, the *Aiaduth* (probably 'al-Fātiḥa', the first *sura* of the Quran): "to believe, and preach the humility of the Divinity, say that God is one and must believe in this."<sup>36</sup> This is very similar to "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". The author had the precise cognition that Islam was monotheistic, and that however great, Muhammad was a prophet for the faithful and not a divinity, a much misunderstood point in Europe concerning Islam. He also identified Moses and Jesus Christ as Muslim prophets, and

pointed out the links between Islam and the Jewish and Christian faiths; his choice, in focusing attention on these common doctrines, helped to portray Islam with greater dignity. The first subgroup also included the *Gualedyn Rayathy* (“*valideyn reayeti*”), to “honour thy father and mother”, the *Meschit Bayaty* (“*mescid bi’ati*”), which was substantially similar to the Mosaic observance of the Sabbath, and also included the obligation to perform the pilgrimage to the House of Mekka at least once in a lifetime.

- 20 The second subgroup includes precepts which refer to the New Testament and prescribe charity, in analogy with the evangelical teachings of loving one’s neighbor and with reference to the first letter of John on charity. These were *Megytlor Cayti* (“*meyyitler kaydi*”), or charity to the dead, and *Sadachà* (“*sadakat*”), charity to the living. Pittoni observed and noted, as many other travelers did, the great humanity of Islam, and the obligation of the faithful for almsgiving and to visit the sick and prisoners.
- 21 The third group consists of two commandments comparable to the two Catholic sacraments, marriage (*Vlimak*) and baptism. What Pittoni interpreted as baptism was circumcision, a procedure that every male adherent to the faith must undergo in remembrance of Ishmael, son of the patriarch Abraham, a ceremony that takes place at the end of the adherent’s thirteenth year. On the other hand, Pittoni found major differences with Christianity in the prescriptions regarding marriage. Here our author indulged in the abused *cliché* of Eastern eroticism. The Turk was said to observe the custom of having sexual intercourse with slave women to produce free children in high regard. There was said to be no limit to the number of concubines: providing the man could support them with dignity, he was allowed the famous harem. In addition, not only men but also women could divorce. If the husband was unjustifiably absent for more than six months, the wife had the right to appeal to the *kadi*’s court in order to marry another man. In this case, the first husband lost all his rights over her, and this made clear to Pittoni’s post-tridentine readers that Islamic marriage was a civil rather than a religious act.
- 22 Finally, the fourth subgroup included the Muslims’ way of relating to God through prayer, and the author here clearly exposed the view that the Muslim attitude was better than the Christian equivalent. The first precept, purification through ablutions before uttering the prayer, included a description of the *hammam*. The author’s attention to Turkish baths, one of the greatest orientalist icons, should not blind us to Pittoni’s respect for the hygienic implications of the “bath-system”, which were far-removed from the European standards of the time.<sup>37</sup> The relationship of Europeans to bodily cleanliness was completely different, and various reactions can be found to this religious and social custom. Some authors appreciated the practice, while others maintained that it was not good to wash too frequently, because this was supposed to weaken one’s body and one’s sexual appetite.<sup>38</sup> The second precept, *Namas* (“*namaz*”), prescribes the behavior associated with prayer. Pittoni expresses his open appreciation of the way in which the Turks behave in the mosque, making several remarks about their respectful and serious attitude. He noticed that Turks did not spit, cough, speak or glance, and that they prevented animals from entering the place of prayer, where the silence was so great that “although the mosque is full of people, if not for the voice of the Imam and, sometimes, of the people responding, it seems that there are no people inside and especially when they make mental prayer.”<sup>39</sup> This appreciation suggests an implicit condemnation of the behavior of the Europeans in the churches of the day, which were treated more as places for social gatherings than as places of prayer.



- 23 It is interesting to notice that as part of the discussion of *Casilarogusy* (“*gaziler doğusu*”), Pittoni concludes his discussion, concerning death as a martyr during holy war against infidels, after only a few lines, showing clearly that after the events in Vienna, the urgency of martyrs and crusaders was no longer felt. In its place, we may detect an ambivalent but liberating sense of curiosity which, over time, prevailed. The *Ragguaglio* was certainly an unpretentious text but, precisely for this reason, it was more indicative of the cultural climate that was beginning to inform the mentality of people at all levels of society. We can reasonably assume that its two reprints within two years are an indication of its editorial success.
- 24 In giving priority to analogies, Pittoni was able to describe the Turk as possessing great human traits as well as a respectable cultural identity and, moreover, even in diversity, as bearing a subtle but definite similarity to the European.
- 25 It is indeed noteworthy how it could be find in the text a trace of the ambiguity proper of the *crise* period between a positive and a negative pole in representing also iconographically the Turk, as in the book were also included woodcut portrayal of two very famous and emblematic Ottoman historical figures of the period, Sultan Mehmet IV and Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha. In this case we might note that for these two men experience was restricted to hearsay rather than eyewitness observation but, in my opinion, they were relevant also for this reason. Since they were stereotypically presented to the imagination of a European audience, they embodied in abstract terms the two sides of the Otherness, as were elaborated by the cultural mindset of the time. The Sultan’s portrait depicted him as being handsome and of noble bearing. He could have quite easily passed as a European ruler, while in the text his life was described according to the same *clichés* that were used to describe Christian sovereigns. The beard was barely visible; his eyes were clear and calm and his clothes far from extravagant. He wore a simple tunic, closed on the chest by a line of frogs; the only piece of jewelry was an earring. The cloak, however, provided an important clue about his status: it was an arabesque and somewhat luxurious cloth garment, decorated on the shoulders with a fur trim and clasped at the neck with a beautiful buckle. The only thing which identified this figure as a Turk was the unambiguous turban.



Sultan Mehmet IV, engraving from Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia, o' sia vero e distinto ragguaglio sullo stato presente della città di Costantinopoli*, Venice, Stamperia Leonardo Pittoni, 1684. Sheet of larger size folded into the text, unnumbered page.

- 26 The portrait of Kara Mustafa Pasha was placed at the end of the text. As we know, in 1684 the Grand Vizier had been executed, as consequence of his failure in the siege of the Habsburg capital. In this regard, it is interesting to note that he was not even mentioned in the first edition of the *Ragguaglio*. In other words, his picture was included so as to enhance the value of the product,<sup>40</sup> by exploiting the fame of a character whose image was, incidentally, much more flamboyant than that of the Sultan. Also, the engraver clearly tried to convey the figure's sense of pride and arrogance. The man, with his bushy beard, was definitely iconographically "more Turkish" than Mehmet. The sword that hung at his side had an elaborate and rich hilt, and behind him stood the Turkish camp, the walls of Vienna besieged, the Ottoman artillery and cavalry poised to attack the infidels and a dense throng charging the city. We can presume that the reader was pleased to find the haughty mastermind of the failed conquest of Europe included in the description of Istanbul, and the publishing industry put itself in the service of knowledge about the event, amplifying and emphasizing it. As Mehmet was the good and noble side of the Other, the Grand Vizier embodied the dark, frightening side.



Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha, engraving from Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia, o' sia vero e distinto ragguaglio sullo stato presente della città di Costantinopoli*, Venice, Stamperia Leonardo Pittoni, 1684. Sheet of larger size folded into the text, unnumbered page.

- 27 Images were used as catalysts for focusing the reader's attention, and to fulfill the desire to depict a distant but truly connoted space. For this reason, the *Ragguaglio* also featured maps of Istanbul, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. Maps represented the visual translation of an experienced space, even though the cartographical representation of Istanbul dated back to a previous period, and was, in Pittoni's age, a fairly standardized practice.<sup>41</sup>



The city of Istanbul, engraved map from Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia, o' sia vero e distinto ragguaglio sullo stato presente della città di Costantinopoli*, Venice, Stamperia Leonardo Pittoni, 1684. Sheet of larger size folded into the text, unnumbered page.

- 28 In conclusion, we can see that experience served in the *Ragguaglio* as a source of cumulative knowledge which was to be shared with Pittoni's readership, having, first and foremost, a pedagogical value and function.

## The Self-centered Narration: the Personal Experience

- 29 The second form of literary typology which can be recognized in these accounts is the personal narrative, in which the traveler's ego acts like a tie, holding together elements which stand in open contradiction. The focus of the narration is the personal experience in itself ("what I did", "what happened to me"), which is almost never connected with an unconventional way of looking upon the Other, but is generally reported through prejudicial statements.
- 30 For this category of traveler and author, in both their texts and thinking, good and evil are intermingled, and this is particularly evident in the two texts that we will now analyze. While the authors of these texts share a particularly strong condemnation of the Turks from a moral point of view, portraying them as barbarians, they both also mingled with the Ottomans in their daily lives. The Bolognese count Luigi Ferdinando Marsili and the Calabrian lawyer Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri<sup>42</sup> developed very different narratives, just as their experiences of travelling were also very different. While Marsili reported his travel experiences in his autobiography, Gemelli Careri was the author of the well known *Giro del mondo* (*Voyage Round the World*), one of the first ever accounts of a journey around the world.<sup>43</sup>
- 31 Marsili's position in Ottoman society as a fellow of the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople explains why, despite his brilliance, his depiction of the local environment is a sort of black and white sketch, stark and lacking in nuance. It seems as though his privileged position as a member of the Venetian diplomatic corps effectively cut him off from direct daily contact with the locals. Marsili's Turks were mainly characterized by cruelty, sensuality and, above all, greed. The count often did nothing to hide his disdain for Ottoman culture, which he judged to be deceptive, treacherous and underhand, and driven by the desire for material gain.<sup>44</sup> The Ottomans of Marsili's *Autobiography* were stereotypical barbarians, and he refers to them using this epithet.<sup>45</sup> Nobody escaped his harsh criticism: at all social levels, Turks were described as lacking courtesy and as being untruthful. Here again, we find the well-known Kara Mustafa, this time presented as an antihero of "infinite arrogance", even though the author unexpectedly (for the reader) acknowledges him to be a "man of great talent".<sup>46</sup> While our evaluation of Marsili experience led us to consider him as prejudiced against the Ottoman social environment, usually catching the Turks as a group and not as individuals, we could however observe how the author is sensitive to the intellectual capacity of the single. This disposition towards Ottoman intellectual culture became more complex the more directly involved he became with real individual during his staying in Istanbul. His well know curiosity was tied with a deep appreciation in the case of his friendship with Hüseyin Efendi, called "the most literate of Constantinople".<sup>47</sup> The high esteem for him because of his vast knowledge (a man "of a thousand-science"<sup>48</sup>) created a link of genuine affection. A real friendship was nourished by discussions about politics, religion and moral philosophy. The count was astonished by his friend's ability to support Islam with strong (however "false") arguments and by his graceful dialectical skills.<sup>49</sup> Religious identity indeed remained the weakest point of the relationship, as

Marsili wrote that such a man, admirably equipped with “talent and morality, [...] made me often think with tenderness about the misfortune of being in Mohammedanism”.<sup>50</sup> The count’s tolerance was more practical than theoretical, although even his prejudicial judgments cannot dispel the impression that he was genuinely fond of Ottoman Istanbul and its culture.<sup>51</sup>

32 Gemelli Careri’s experience was in many ways the opposite of Marsili’s: a genuine, anonymous, traveler, moving without a diplomatic apparatus. His condition is reflected in his work as a very down-to-earth attitude: the Turks of Gemelli Careri were encounters rather than sketchy figures. We should point out that the encounter here embodied the experience itself. It is a very physical experience, made by a sequence of accounts of meetings with various real “others”; the author often reported his interactions with characters met along the way. Often, the conditions under which these encounters took place were far from ideal. Careri denounced the fact that Christian travelers in Muslim countries were often forced to endure abuses (*avanie*),<sup>52</sup> and that they could also be exposed to the risk of enslavement, if found by the Ottoman officers without a safe-conduct that should be required to one of the consulates in the Ottoman Empire. But these were common problems even when travelling in Europe, especially when there was a war underway –a rather common occurrence. As with other authors, Careri stigmatizes the Turks as barbarians, while at the same time commingling with them to a considerable degree. One of his most eloquent descriptions is of the agha of Seyde (Sidon, in Lebanon), a rather picaresque figure, who embodies the author’s stereotype of the Ottomans. In the first episode, the agha is offered a sea urchin during a stop on the journey from Rhodes to Izmir, but has no idea how to eat it. Careri writes: “that *beast* opposed it to the fire to roast as if it was fish, and really in acts and words you knew that he was wild because he wore a beard of a necromancer, or rather of a *goat* nurtured between beasts in the forest”.<sup>53</sup> This eloquent portrait is reinforced by the second episode: once in Izmir, Gemelli invited the agha to drink a precious cup of chocolate. The “*good satyr*, who never had tasted similar beverage (maybe having his mind altered by it or by the tobacco smoke) complained fiercely about me, saying that I had given him some poisonous liquor to make him mad and bereft of understanding and, certainly, if the alteration continued, he would give me what I deserved for giving chocolate to a *donkey*”.<sup>54</sup> The passages displays how the Turk, unaccustomed to the seafood much appreciated by Greek and southern Italian cultures, or to the fashionable American beverage, was assumed to lack of civility. In spite of this, we can observe that in both cases there was a food offer,<sup>55</sup> moreover of a precious food, a refined delicacy.<sup>56</sup> That testify for us that, despite all the unfair and bestial epithets –beast, goat, satyr, donkey–, which are strong enough to label the account as “orientalistic”, it can be argued the author had a genuine exchange with the agha. Moreover, offers also imply a desire of relationship and communication. During his voyage, Gemelli Careri often felt deeply isolated and cut out of the social intermingling, suffering a lot from his inability to communicate with the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. When reporting his journey to Rhodes, he wrote: “I lowered myself to the ground, seeking relief from the melancholy of seeing myself among Turks and Greeks without being able to be understood.”

33 This quote allows us to consider the liminal condition of being a traveler and, going further, the very meaning of the tendency of travelers, typically, to aggregate among themselves, as we have previously underlined. In the enlarged travelers’ society, the personal unique and distinctive features, which might compromise the establishment

of interpersonal relationships in the context of the different national origins of the travelers, were softened through the emphasis given to the common condition of travelling.

- 34 Gemelli Careri expressed this very plainly: “the competition, however, and wars between nations should not break the course of private friendships, especially in a foreign and barbaric country”.<sup>57</sup> And then: “among the numberless ills caused by self-love which is the only source and root of all evils, one of the major ills must doubtless be considered the excessive anticipation that we have, most of the time, of our country and our customs.”<sup>58</sup> Sharing a strong sense of camaraderie, and the common pride of belonging to a superior culture, travelers were able to transcend national particularisms in a faraway context, where personal relationships took on a unique value, much greater than the sense of national identity.<sup>59</sup> All these considerations played a role in allowing the travelers to overcome their own cultural prejudices through practical engagement in everyday life, which brought them into conflict with those who had never exposed themselves to something totally alien. We can argue as this aspect of the experience could provide a better disposition of the travelers in being more open minded even towards the “other”, the non-European –namely here the Ottomans. Of course, on the other hand, there was a strong religion-based cultural prejudice against the “Turks”, which explains why there were strict limits to the open-mindedness of the travelers. But indeed they put the real act of travelling as the source of a “real” knowledge of the world. And, in fact, Careri, observing how the pride in national customs concealed within itself a certain physical and mental cowardice, stated plainly that non-travelers “consider that the whole world is confined within the space that relates to [their] eyes, and distrust others [who] have seen other countries, where they scare you to go unto, even in the imagination”.<sup>60</sup> This passage highlights also the strong ambiguity of this typology of reporting, in which the subject of the narration is more the “moving self” than the real travel, in which the objective (and often “positive”) events which occur clash with the persistence of prejudice. This conflict sometimes opens the way, as in the last quote from Careri, to considerations framed in general terms that seem very close to theorizations about the value of experience as an epistemological tool, and to the recognition of how meaningful another system of values could be.

## The Conscious Narration: the Encounter

- 35 Such potential ambivalence is overcome in the third and last typology of narration, in which the clear and logical connections between real observation, general considerations and personal experience are transformed into a real open-minded awareness. However, it must be stressed that the attitude of Giuseppe Sorio, the last of our travelers, towards Otherness was extremely rare and the result of a very sensitive personality.
- 36 The extreme flexibility of re-shaping mental attitudes finds, in fact, its highest expression in the ability to achieve a complete reversal of perspective. Giuseppe Sorio, a Vicentine traveler, expressed this attitude at its best. In his text, Sorio was labelled only as a traveler. This is a very interesting detail, which should be examined in the context of his biography in order to better understand his personality. Sorio was born in Vicenza in 1663, in a very prosperous and cultured family. He began to travel in

Europe before the turn of the century, first to Paris and then to London. In England he was imprisoned on charges of being a Francophile, and he was released in 1702. Back in Italy, he set off on a new journey almost immediately, visiting the Netherlands and the "Orient". On 30 April 1705, he embarked on a journey to Istanbul, the Holy Land, Egypt and Barbary.

37 The extent of his ramblings up and down Europe, and around the Mediterranean, suggests that for Sorio travelling was almost a physical necessity, towards which he was pushed by his very nature. He is the real prototype of the Enlightenment traveler, possessing a broad culture, language skills and, above all, a strong belief that honest curiosity was the only gateway to knowledge. Sometimes this led him to exceed the limits of modern sensitivity. This is the case in his close encounter with a mummy in 1707. With hardly any qualms, he undertook to "un-bandage one of those semi-corpses",<sup>61</sup> complaining that the operation caused him "more boredom than I could believe".<sup>62</sup> He also reported that the locals mocked him for coming "from the other side of the world"<sup>63</sup> only to do such a thing. While his action may seem shocking to a modern audience, it reveals the desire to experiment and be a first-hand witness. This desire is also present in the letter which Sorio wrote from Istanbul, where he shows an incredibly open and articulate elaboration of the Other's culture; the author's personality does not hang over the scene, and priority is given to unbiased observations of reality. Unlike the other travelers we have discussed, Sorio wrote this text as a letter to his friend Gaetano Chiericati for informing him and their common friends, and it was not originally intended for wide circulation, but for an intellectual elite.<sup>64</sup> Beginning his account, he writes: "if you could honestly depart from Constantinople without making any account to friends, I will exempt myself from it willingly".<sup>65</sup> This exceptional city could barely be described, and only through the expression of wonder. Although the description of Istanbul was a *topos* in travel literature, Sorio's account is rather unique. It displays an unusual lucidity and an open-mindedness that goes beyond what we find even in other non-ordinary authors. In Sorio's account, we finally find the plain expression of real experience as absolute value, as he stated that he did not want to give an account of anything that he had not witnessed himself. On one occasion, talking about the Topkapı Palace, he specified that "I say nothing about the inner distribution of the apartments, where no one can enter, so as not to vainly replicate many uncertain things that are known to everybody from other authors who have spoken often of little more than fairy tales: so I will restrict myself briefly to those parts that can be seen".<sup>66</sup> But the elaboration of the same argument in the case of Aya Sofya digresses from the limits of his need to see and measure everything himself. In fact, in expressing his opinion on the European habit of comparing the domes of Aya Sofya to those of Saint Peter in the Vatican, remarking that as for the dimensions of the two monuments, he did not want to be "guarantor of measures not taken with my own hands",<sup>67</sup> he went further stating: "I do not want to choose between the two tastes, which both seem good to me".<sup>68</sup>

38 The very innovative attitude to want to write only about what he had witnessed himself converges what we consider his most valuable quality, namely a mentality to appreciate foreign cultures. Sorio's observation skills, nourished by the continuous experiential exercise, led him to a high intellectual development of the intrinsic meanings of the other's culture. Even though Ottoman despotism was considered responsible for allowing Istanbul to fall into decay, in comparison to the idealized magnificence and grandeur of the Byzantine ages,<sup>69</sup> Sorio softened this picture by

stating that the management of power still left “place for clemency and moderation”.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, he never used the epithet “barbarians” in referring to the Turks.

- 39 The two ways of describing the other, through similarities and differences, were blended together to produce a superlative result, whereby the author acknowledged the legitimacy of a different system of values. According to him, it was prejudice that gave Europeans their severely curtailed view of Turkish customs. However, when faced with the Ottoman mosques, “we will estimate them beautiful if the uncultivated barbarism that we assume in the Turks does not eclipse our discernment”.<sup>71</sup> This amazing passage, and his declared awareness of the relativity of cultural values, placed Sorio way ahead of almost all his contemporaries: he writes that “who wants to know the good manners of others has to put aside his own taste and examine them without any partiality because of it”.<sup>72</sup> According to Sorio, it was pointless to determine whether a Turkish house was beautiful or ugly according to the typical criteria of European baroque society. Even the members of Ottoman high society did not share the “desire for eternity” that led Europe’s noble families to build palaces designed to last “forever”.<sup>73</sup> The absence of blood aristocracy in the Ottoman state was so foreign to the mentality of the European elite that often travelers did not notice the elaboration of strategies by the Ottoman elite for allowing the transmission of the family’s possessions and securing a kind of succession in power and position following genealogical lines.<sup>74</sup>
- 40 Sorio pointed out that the Turks had other cultural priorities and that they designed the products of their culture according to their own needs. If the caravanserais, “that we would call houses or warehouses (*fondaco*) of merchants [...], do not have the paintings of the Fasolo, if they are not elegant as the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice, they are, however, massive in structure and abound in all the facilities to which they are ordered for”.<sup>75</sup> For sure, one of the houses on the Bosphorus “would be ridiculous if it was on the Brenta”<sup>76</sup> but, penetrating “the taste of the nation without seeking our architecture”<sup>77</sup>, it would be found comfortable and well structured. As even the concept of comfort was relative, their “natural ways of living [...] are so remote from ours, that the means and the tools necessary to us for the conveniences of life are useless for them”.<sup>78</sup> The rooms of the houses should then be arranged differently, and one would not find fireplaces, while “our windows are too high for them, who want to see outside sitting on the ground”.<sup>79</sup> In conclusion, “the differences in life are infinite, because of this it is impossible for a Turk to feel at home in an European-style palace without spending enough to change it as it is necessary to build a house for his taste, lasting enough for his life, after which little more is wished for amongst the Turks, where usually a man’s fortune begins and ends with life, in particular in the great [people] who could decorate the city with rich buildings”.<sup>80</sup>
- 41 The ability to present the readers with relevant parallels with their reality was used by Sorio to emphasize the dignity and cultural diversity he encountered. Depicting the diversity in another system of values, painted in all its complexity but brought close to the readers’ mindset by familiar examples, allowed him to open their minds to a new way of thinking.
- 42 In conclusion, we note that first-hand experience sometimes made the travelers more sensitive to the “other” and sometimes not, which depended on background, personality, mentality, and position. Eventually, it was not automatic that experience made people more open-minded. It was a tool which gave them an opportunity to test their biases –in this case towards the unbelieving, uncivilized Turk– with divergent



results. What experience achieved was to de-idealize the Ottoman Turks, in line with the awareness of military weakening of the Ottoman state in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> I mean that what most of these accounts confirm is that the Turks were no longer admired for their military might, or the wealth and discipline of their state, but were seen as a people not worthy of respect, appreciation or fear in the military field. Rather than “expansion of awareness” in a modern, culturally positive sense, it provided the Turks with flesh and bones.

## Conclusions

- 43 The aim of this essay has been to highlight how this process was made possible through the value given to first-hand knowledge. Through simple narrative, often not even supported by explicit theorization, travelers showed their readers not only a different world, but also the real possibility of creating a profound, and for some of them meaningful interaction with that world. Moreover, we have observed that often this second aspect is entirely implicit and we could even detect it as an unconscious attitude. What we consider fundamental in this process is not so much the awareness of the individual authors as their reaction to a different environment and the transformation of this reaction into narrative.
- 44 Their “bridge role” is quite obvious. These different narrative styles allow a range of possibilities of literary manipulation of physical action and also different ways to transmit the information. We would like to highlight a further observation on these three ways of translating experience that represent the foundation of the epistemological value of travel narratives, the *ars apodemica*. The fabrication of a literary corpus has allowed us to have access to different modalities of communicating cultural encounters and making them real and at the disposal of the Italian and wider European audiences. The ways of communicating that we have detected may be configured within a narrative typology that is built along three different lines. The first is represented by the “guide”. The author describes the location that he had visited, adding to this the image of delights, following an impersonal narrative style which is the strong point of the text itself. The second is the “personal experience”. The record of the journey is powerfully based on the author-protagonist with his catalyzing personality, assurance of the authenticity of the described “Song of the Experience”. The third and last is the “encounter”. The author situates his experience at a crossroad, creating a dialectic both with potential readers and the community of travelers which is the real granter of authenticity. After the information has been validated, it provides and enhances both the value of the specific item of travel literature and the meaning of the apodemic experience. Information, having passed through these different stages of elaboration, achieves its final goal of reporting the “truth” (geographical, social, cultural), one of the crucial issues that was at the heart of the success of this genre in the eighteenth century.
- 45 Despite ambivalences, this “information” was what made the Turks real to European audiences, showing their independence from the European system of value, the dignity of their own cultural context, a concrete alternative to the European readers’ experience of daily life. First-hand experience made them to come out from the pages of the accounts as real people and not only like a product of stereotypes.

- 46 The increasing movement of people, both in absolute and literary terms, was translated into variety in the theme of the Other. We have showed how the implicit value of this literary transmission, even in absence of a lack of prejudice by the authors, led them to present the Turks to their European audience as they were observed, which often involved a positive, unprejudiced description, though sometimes this elaboration could not take place, since some authors still remained bias even after their travel to the “Orient”.
- 47 The different kinds of experience (impersonal, self-centered and conscious) of the Other observed in different degrees, became a source of authority in speaking about cultural diversity to those people who were curious about the world. This meant that, going beyond contradictions and ambiguity, there was a new awareness according to which the real act of knowing relied upon a physical one, giving to real travelers the right to be teachers for the armchair travelers. Coming back to Paul Hazard, we agree with him that this represents a turning point for the mindset of the Europeans of Ancient Regime societies, the travelers having gained the right to express a more informed opinion not by virtue of authority, but by virtue of their actual, physical and concrete fatigue.

## NOTES

1. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del Mondo Del Dottor D. Gio: Francesco Gemelli*, Venice, Stamperia Giovanni Maffei, 1718, p. 3.
2. The wide variety of people in between cultures (travelers, interpreters, ambassadors, merchants, slaves, renegades, pirates, and so forth) in the Early Modern Mediterranean world has recently received increasing scholarly attention. For a general overview of this game played on the frontiers, see Bernard Heyberger and Chantal Verdeuil (eds.), *Hommes de l'entre-deux. Parcours individuels et portraits de groupes sur la frontière de la Méditerranée (XVI<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris, Indes Savantes, 2009, as well as Natalie E. Rothman, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2012. For a masterful enquiry into the individual experience of “internal frontier”, see Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels. A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds*, New York, Hill & Wang, 2006.
3. Paul Hazard, *La crise de la conscience européenne* [1935], English trans. *The European Mind, the Critical Years, 1680-1715*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1952. Hazard's interpretation has become widespread and central to the historiographical debate, where it has been harshly criticized. Jonathan I. Israel eventually overcame Hazard's periodization, although he reformulated it. In his *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, Israel openly challenges Hazard's view, and traces the genealogy of the change of mentality back to Spinoza's thought. Hazard's analysis, even if formulated in the 1930s, is extraordinarily brilliant, and constitutes for us a still relevant interpretive tool.
4. For an enquiry into the history and use of the concept of experience, see Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience. Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005. An interesting perspective on the creative role of experience in

constructing reality is offered in Mercedes Fernández-Martorell, “La experiencia como invento”, *Historia, Antropología y Fuentes Orales*, n° 26, ‘Denuncia Social’, 2001, p. 85-96.

5. There is abundant literature on this subject, but here we only cite three fundamental reference works. Within an interdisciplinary dialogue with the social sciences, a fundamental work is Bernard Lepetit (ed.), *Les formes de l’expérience: Une autre histoire sociale*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1995, a collective methodological reflection on the construction of forms of social identity in the historical narration through the re-thinking of epistemological categories. The recent Guido Abbattista (ed.), *Encountering Otherness. Diversities and Transcultural Experiences in Early Modern European Culture*, Trieste, EUT-Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2011 provides a wide overview of different approaches of Early Modern experience of the Otherness. Always relevant and inspiring remains the work of Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986, with the dialectic between image, orality and writing, since, to write about the other, one needs first to look and listen to the other.

6. On these shifting categories in the Ottoman lands, see Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*, New York, I. B. Tauris, 2006.

7. On the role of experience in relation to travel, see also Nasia Yiakovaki, *Ευρώπη μέσω Ελλάδας. Μια καμπή στην ευρωπαϊκή αυτοσυνείδηση, 17ος-18ος αιώνας*, Athens, I. D. Kollaros & SIA, 2006. The targets of Yiakovaki’s enquiry are British and French reports of the period in Greece, even though the analysis is developed through consideration of the concept of being “European” and through the use of Hazard’s notion of crises.

8. On the development of “the desire of seeing Foreign Places”, and the “vain-glory of being named a Traveler”, see Gerald M. MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel. English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 187.

9. For a deep enquiry conducted on the Italian press of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, see the pioneering work of Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali. Alle origini della pubblica informazione*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 2002.

10. Sabina Minuzzi, *Il secolo di carta. Antonio Bosio artigiano di testi e immagini nella Venezia del Seicento*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2009, p. 64.

11. The *Introductions to the Reader* of travel accounts tended to insist on the accuracy of the reported information, showing clearly the will of both authors and publishers to be considered reliable. Also the titles of the accounts often contain statements in this regard: “true and distinct account”, “very true relation”, “accurate report” (*vero e distinto ragguaglio, verissima relazione, esatta notizia*).

12. In Venice, there was a similar public reaction to the campaign of the Morea, the Venetian-Ottoman war for the control of the Peloponnese (1684-1699); Mario Infelise Mario and Anastasia Stouraiti (eds.), *Venezia e la guerra di Morea. Guerra, politica e cultura alla fine del 600*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 2005, containing an analysis of the busy and “fast” publishing world.

13. This trend can easily be checked scrolling through the list of publications printed in Venice in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in Caterina Griffante (ed.), *Le edizioni veneziane del Seicento. Censimento*, 2 vol., Milan, Editrice Bibliografica, 2003-2006. The number of travel and geographical accounts not only increased constantly by the second half of the century, but we also find many reprints.

14. According to recent literature, this shift was rather rapid and dramatic. See, for instance, Paula Sutter Fichtner, *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire confronts Islam (1529-1850)*, London, The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

15. Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali...*, *op. cit.*

16. Carla Coco and Flora Manzonetto, *Baili Veneziani alla Sublime Porta: Storia e Caratteristiche dell’Ambasciata Veneta a Costantinopoli*, Venice, Stamperia di Venezia, 1985. See also Marie De Testa and Antoine Gautier, *Drogmans et diplomates européens auprès de la Porte ottomane*, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2003.

17. We fully agree with the assertion that “the act of travel itself [...] consistently offered the traveler [...] the opportunity to engage in a constructive questioning and self-examination of

previously unquestioned beliefs and habits”: Mark Rennella and Whitney Walton, “Planned Serendipity: American Travelers and the Transatlantic Voyage in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries”, *Journal of Social History*, n° 38/2, Winter 2004, p. 336. The article provides also an interesting perspective on the creative role of travelling on the individual mindset.

18. On the literary transmission of scientific knowledge acquired through direct experience see Felix Driver, “Distance and Disturbance: Travel, Exploration and Knowledge in the Nineteenth Century”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, n° 14, 2004, p. 73-92.

19. The “society of travelers” described in Antoni Maczak, *Travel in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995.

20. In the *Introduction to the Reader* of these texts, one may often find the expressions “you will know”, “you will see” (*saprai, conoscerai, vedrai*), or “to give information” (*dare notizia*), or “to not be in doubt about what I am going to recount” (*non essere in dubbio di quanto io vo ricontando*).

21. In this regard, see the introduction to Marziano Guglielminetti (ed.), *Viaggiatori del Seicento*, Turin, UTET, 1967, p. 54-57.

22. On this point, we refer to the debate opened by Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, New York, Vintage, 1979. On the role of travel accounts in colonial policy, see Nedret Kuran-Burçoğlu, “The Development of the Image of the Turk in Europe”, in Mustafa Soykut (ed.), *Historical Image of the Turk in Europe: 15<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present. Political and Civilisational Aspects*, Istanbul, Isis Press, 2003, p. 21-37.

23. The oscillation between positive and negative elaborations of the image of the Turk characterized different European environments and, for the Italian peninsula, the Venetian Republic was among those which had the more complex and articulated relationship. The representation of the Turks as admirable and respectable, often linked to the Ancient Romans, was already present in the Venetian culture of the late Renaissance. See the classical works of Paolo Preto, *Venezia e i Turchi*, Florence, G. C. Sansoni, 1975 and Lucette Valensi, *Venise et la Sublime Porte: la naissance du despote*, Paris, Hachette, 1987. Valensi identified in the post-Lepanto period a change in the Venetian policy that affected also the cultural perception of the Venetians about the Ottomans.

24. On the comparison of the European representation with the self-picture the Ottomans wanted to give of themselves see Suraiya Faroqhi, *Another Mirror for Princes. The Public Image of the Ottoman Sultans and Its Reception*, Istanbul, The Isis Press, 2009.

25. See the definition of “armchair travelers” in Attilio Brilli, *Il viaggio in Oriente*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009, p. 163-166. On the topic, see Paul Hazard, *The European Mind...*, *op. cit.*, stressing that the “Orient”, even in the deformed image of the time, still carried an original force and represented a non-Christian value, a human mass that had built its own concepts of morality, truth and happiness. It was one of the reasons why the consciousness of old Europe felt deeply perturbed and *wanted to be perturbed*.

26. In this regard, a well-known example is provided by the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, London, Virago Press, 1994.

27. This topic has been extensively debated by comparative literature scholars. According to the *Enciclopedia Treccani*, the notion of travel literature is defined by an “uncertain status”. Far from pretending to produce an exhaustive bibliographical reference on the topic, see a general overview in Michel Butor, “Le voyage et l’écriture”, *Romantisme*, no 4, 1972, p. 4-19; Eric J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism*, New York, Basic Books, 1992; Paolo Scarpì, *La fuga e il ritorno: storia e mitologia del viaggio*, Venice, Marsilio, 1992; Pino Fasano, *Letteratura e viaggio*, Rome, Laterza, 1999; Daniel-Henri Pageaux, *Le Séminaire de ‘Ain Chams. Une introduction à la littérature générale et comparée*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2008; Jennifer Speake (ed.), *The Literature of Travel and Exploration. An Encyclopedia*, 3 vol., New York, Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003.

28. This process is parallel to the one described in Kathryn Blair Moore, “The Disappearance of an Author and the Emergence of a Genre: Niccolò da Poggibonsi and Pilgrimage Guidebooks between Manuscript and Print”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, n° 66/2, summer 2013, p. 357-411.
29. Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia, o' sia vero e distinto ragguaglio sullo stato presente della città di Costantinopoli*, Venice, Stamperia Leonardo Pittoni, 1684. The book was reprinted with some additions twice in the two following years. It comprises a description of the city, the life of the Sultan, the Islamic rites, and of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus.
30. One of the most important authors of the *stamperia* was Giovanni Battista Pittoni, a Catholic secular priest. The son of Leonardo, he wrote a collection of works on Roman religious congregations and orders and was also famous for his biography of Pope Benedict XI.
31. The edition of 1684 was simply a reprint while the one of 1686 was a new edition. See Caterina Griffante (ed.), *Le edizioni veneziane...*, *op. cit.*, entry “Pittoni Giovanni Pietro”. The author also edited the previously mentioned biography of Benedict XI of Giovanni Battista Pittoni in the edition of 1691. Another work of 1691 attributed to him is *Suegliarino alli Signori Veneziani per poter con sicurezza viver di continuo in sanita, fino gli anni cento e dieci*. All the works were printed by Leonardo Pittoni. Giovanni Pietro Pittoni should not be confused with his namesake, a painter (1687-1767) active mostly in Venice, on whom we can get information through Laura Pittoni, *Dei Pittoni, artisti veneti*, Bergamo, Istituto Italiano d'Arti Grafiche, 1907.
32. Unfortunately, we do not have any information about the printing run of the editions.
33. Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 5. The urge to know and see (*brama d'indagare*) has to be regarded as the first prerequisite to be a true traveler.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
37. At the beginning of his account, Pittoni dwelt upon the description of the public baths in Istanbul (according to his estimation, there were about 220) where, for four aspers, anyone could enter to wash himself. In addition, “there are many baths in all places of the Turks and, if there are none, they bath in their own house.” In addition, all the mosques have fountains and vases with water “in order that each one can be washed with convenience”: Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
38. Antoine Galland, the French Orientalist and first European translator of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, talked about this custom in his travel account on Smyrna of 1678. He considered the hypothesis that excessive body washing had reduced fertility among the Turkish population.
39. Giovanni Pietro Pittoni, *Historia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
40. This addition is also highlighted in the book's title, where its contents are listed: “and the portrait of the Grand Vizier, who was in the siege of Vienna” (& *il ritratto del gran visir, che fù sotto l'assedio di Vienna*). In the second edition on 1686 was added a fifth part on “The life and death of Kara Mustafa, Grand Vizier, who was in the siege of Vienna” (*La vita, & morte di Carra Mustafa gran visir, che fu sotto l'assedio di Vienna*).
41. See Ian R. Manners, “Constructing the Image of a City: The Representation of Constantinople in Christopher Buondelmonti's *Liber Insularum Archipelagi*”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, n° 87/1, March 1997, p. 72-102.
42. Marsili was born in Bologna, on 20 July 1658, and died in the same city, on 1 November 1730. His family belonged to the town aristocracy and this guaranteed him a very prominent career. He was the Imperial plenipotentiary at the negotiations of the Peace of Karlovitz and the head of the committee engaged in the diplomatic agreements regarding the boundaries between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires. Marsili travelled to Istanbul for the first time in July 1679, remaining there for about a year, as a comrade of the newly elected *bailo* Pietro Civran. Gemelli Careri was born in Radicena, modern Taurianova, in 1651, and died in Naples in 1725. His decision to leave was almost forced, due in part to his exclusion from high offices in the *Giudicatura* of the

Kingdom because of his humble origins, and partly to personal enmities he had in Naples. Frustrated and exasperated, he moved away from the city full of regrets and embarked upon an undertaking which, ironically, would make him famous. On 14 June 1693, he started a journey around the world that lasted five years.

43. Gemelli was the second Italian to complete a journey around the world. The first Italian circumnavigation of the globe was held as early as the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Francesco Carletti, a Florentine merchant. It lasted 12 years, from 1594 to 1606. Carletti died on 12 January 1636, after recording his experience in the report entitled *Ragionamenti del mio viaggio intorno al mondo*, Turin, Gianfranco Silvestro, 1958.

44. For example, when Marsili described the reception reserved to the new Venetian delegation, he called it flattery in hopes of receiving “as usual, great donatives”: Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, *Autobiografia di Luigi Marsigli, a cura del Comitato Marsiliano*, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1930, p. 14.

45. *Ibid.* The autobiography remained unpublished until the edition cited in the previous footnote, by Emilio Lovarini. It was probably dictated by Marsili in 1704-1705, and then were added autograph fragments, concerning some interviews with Clement XI, between 1710 and 1711.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, *Autobiografia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Hüseyin Efendi represents the stereotype of the “good Turk”. We can compare this stereotype with the *topos* of the “good Jew” and the fascination with wisdom developed in the context of another cultural and religious system of values.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Coming back to the Ottoman capital for a diplomatic mission on behalf of the Emperor, in 1691-92, in spite of the burden of his official duties, Marsili denoted himself not only to the observation of natural phenomena, but also to the gathering of Greek codices and manuscripts “extracted from the Imperial seraglio of Constantinople; and also Turkish, Arabic and Persian [ones], treating natural observation and geography”: Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, *Autobiografia...*, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

52. *Avanie* have long been considered as arbitrary abuses, but it has recently been stressed that they left ample space of negotiation: Maurits Hubrecht van den Boogert, *The Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: qadis, Consuls and beraths in the 18<sup>th</sup> century*, Leyde, Brill, 2005.

53. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del Mondo*, Naples, Stamperia Giuseppe Roselli, 1699, p. 200-201. The second edition was printed in Venice in 1718, less than twenty years after. The success of the book surprised the author himself. In the introduction of the second edition he wrote that he decided to proceed to the reprint of *Giro del Mondo*, “copies of which started to become quite rare, more than ever I should, or could, hope”.

54. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del Mondo...*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

55. For the deep religious, social and anthropological implications of the act of food sharing, see Martin Jones, *Feast. Why Humans Share Food*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007; L. Shannon Jung, *Sharing Food: Christian Practices for Enjoyment*, Minneapolis, Augsburg Fortress, 2006.

56. On the consumption of exotic foods like tea, coffee and chocolate in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see Piero Camporesi, *Exotic Brew: The Art of Living in the Age of Enlightenment*, Hoboken, Wiley, 1998.

57. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del Mondo...*, *op. cit.*, p. 333. This referred to the custom of English and French eating at the same table in Istanbul, even though there was a war underway between their mother countries.

58. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del Mondo...*, *op. cit.*, second edition, fourth part, first book, p. 1.

59. Here national identity is used with the meaning of identifying themselves according to the place of origin and of being born subjects of the same sovereign.

60. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *Giro del Mondo...*, *op. cit.*, second edition, forth part, first book, p. 3.
61. Giuseppe Sorio, “Lettera XI. Viaggio e descrizione delle piramidi e delle mummie con tavole dei disegni”, in Andrea Caparozzo (ed.), *Giuseppe Sorio viaggiatore vicentino*, Vicenza, Burato, 1881.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. The first edition was published in 1853, by the Tipografia Tramontini of Vicenza, with the title *Descrizione di Costantinopoli. Lettera di Giuseppe Sorio viaggiatore vicentino*. As we can read in the introduction, it was commissioned by “some friend for the Fiorasi-Boscolo propitious marriage”. This detail is extremely significant, denoting how a printed report of travel in the East could be regarded as a valuable wedding gift. The decision to publish the letter from Istanbul, among the author’s many, was justified by the fact that “nowadays all eyes are turned” to that city, probably because of the Crimean War.
65. Giuseppe Sorio, *Descrizione di Costantinopoli...*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 13-14.
68. *Ibid.*
69. Although the city was no longer as it had been under the Christian emperors, Istanbul remained one of the most beautiful in the world, according to Giuseppe Sorio, *Descrizione di Costantinopoli...*, *op. cit.*, p. 60-61.
70. Giuseppe Sorio, *Descrizione di Costantinopoli...*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
73. A strong necessity was felt by the European aristocracy of the baroque era to leave a “sign” in the urban space. On this practice of architectural perpetuation of the earthly existence, see Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Il bisogno di eternità. I comportamenti aristocratici a Napoli in età moderna*, Naples, Guida, 1988.
74. The *muşādara*, “the practice of the confiscation to the Ottoman treasury of the property of a deceased and/or dismissed official and other person” (*muşādara*, vol. 7, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden-New York, E. J. Brill, 1993), had started to be circumvented by the members of the most prominent families, especially since the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One may also observe at that time a development in Ottoman society through the formation of a middle class of officers. See Rifa’at ‘Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State. The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, New York, State University of New York Press, 2005, p. 48-49, 57; Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire. Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 56-57; I. Metin Kunt, *The Sultan’s Servants. The Transformation of Ottoman Provincial Government*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1983, p. 54-56. These references also discuss the elaboration of new strategies for the transmission of a family’s estate.
75. Giuseppe Sorio, *Descrizione di Costantinopoli...*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.* For a novel architectural language, and a new sense of elegance and comfort, see the analysis of the so called “Tulip Era” by Stefanos Yerasimos, *Κωνσταντινούπολη: από το Βυζάντιο μέχρι σήμερα*, Athens, Ekdoseis Karakotsoglou, 2006. For the development of the new trend in the following century see Hamadeh Shirine, *The City’s Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*, Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 2007.

81. On the topic see Asli Çirakman, *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe": European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth*, New York, Peter Lang, 2004.

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## ABSTRACTS

The essay focuses on Italian travelers in the Ottoman Empire between the late seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century. Through analysis of four works and the detection of three different ways of translating the "real act" of traveling into literature, we introduce experience as an epistemological tool. Impersonal narration, treatment of the act of knowing as a personal achievement and narration as a way of sharing a conscious encounter with the "other" convey a knowledge based on first-hand experience. Leaving behind the principle of authority based on tradition, a new dignity was given to authority that came from the physical act of the concrete experience of the author himself. The ability of authors to overcome prejudices in their narratives of their encounters with Turkish culture and society should not be given for granted. Nevertheless, there is greater articulation and sensitivity in the definition of diversity. The dissemination and editorial success of this kind of writings had also an impact on the mentality of these author's readers in the Italian peninsula.

Cet article s'intéresse aux voyageurs italiens dans l'Empire Ottoman entre la fin du xvii<sup>e</sup> et le début du xviii<sup>e</sup> siècle. À travers l'analyse de quatre travaux et la reconnaissance de trois façons de traduire, dans la littérature, le voyage comme un fait, nous introduisons l'expérience en tant qu'un objet épistémologique. Le style narratif impersonnel, la considération de « l'acte de savoir » comme réussite personnelle, et l'emploi de la narration comme moyen de partager une rencontre consciente avec l'autre, conduisent à une connaissance fondée sur sa propre expérience. En se détachant du principe d'autorité fondé sur la tradition, une nouvelle autorité émerge désormais de l'acte physique de l'expérience concrète vécue par les auteurs. Leur capacité à dépasser, dans leur narration, les préjugés de leurs confrontations avec la culture et la société turque, ne doit pas être donnée pour acquise. L'on remarque néanmoins une articulation et une plus grande sensibilité dans la façon de décrire la diversité. Grâce à la diffusion de ces travaux et à leur succès éditorial, ce genre d'écrit exerce un impact sur la mentalité des lecteurs dans la péninsule italienne.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** voyageurs, Empire ottoman, ars apodemica, représentation de l'altérité, crise de la conscience européenne

**Keywords:** travelers, Ottoman Empire, ars apodemica, representation of Otherness, crisis of the european conscience



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