

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES****DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE****A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF NOEL BARBER'S
OUTLOOK ON THE OTTOMAN AND TURKISH
LEADERS THROUGH THE CENTURIES****UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

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PREFACE

I have been learning English for years and the NEU has given me a chance to improve my English. In the NEU I have learnt a lot about English language and Literature that is because I am in the department of English Language and Literature.

I would like to say thanks especially to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan and every person who has given me a lot of useful knowledge. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan has been a very important person for me during my education because of her friendly attitude towards me. For my under graduate thesis, Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan and I chose the topic together. The topic which I am glad to choose is *Lords of the Golden Horn* by Noel Barber. It is related to history and I have found it easy because I am very much interested in history. This topic is mixed up with history and Literature. I went to Turkey to Bilkent University in Ankara to carry out a research on this topic. After this research, I have spend four months preparing my undergraduate thesis.

I am very happy now, because I am coming to the end of my life as a student, I would like to say that I am very excited, proud of being at the NEU and experienced.

Finally, I would like to thank again all the people in the NEU who gave me the chance to found my personality.

ALİŞEM RATİPOĞLU

INTRODUCTION

Noel Barber's *Lords of the Golden Horn* is a book about the Sultans, their harems and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Noel Barber tried to give some information about the Ottoman Sultans and their life style. In short *Lords of the Golden Horn* is the history of the Ottoman Empire. However, Noel Barber's attitude towards the Ottoman Empire and the Turks is negative. Barber has tried to show the decline of a mighty and colorful Empire thorough the eyes and actions of the Sultans and their concubines in the Harem from the time of Suleiman the Magnificent to the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In addition to all of these, Noel Barber wrote a history book, where he combined fact and fiction but to sound realistic he usually quoted minds from travel books written at the time when the events occurred. Using these quotations, Noel Barber tries to justify himself.

Noel Barber has had a distinguished career as a writer. He was for many years chief foreign correspondent of the Daily Mail and lived in a wide variety of locations. He went on to become a best selling novelist before his death in 1988.

The history of the Ottoman and Turks is not so much the story of great battles as of the events leading up to them, though he has made an expectation with the seige of Plevna, partly because it provides a superb example of the Turkish talent for bull dog defence, but also because it is such a rattling good yarn that he could not resist it.

A Critical Analysis of Noel Barber's Outlook on the Ottoman and Turkish Leaders through the centuries & how Noel Barber sees the Ottomans and Turks.

PART ONE THE YEARS OF DECLINE

1-The Grand Seraglio

In the mid sixteenth century, when Sultan Suleiman, the magnificent, ruled the Ottomans, The most magnificent place in Constantinople was the Grand Seraglio of the Sultan.

The Grand Seraglio had belonged to the Sultans, (emprerors) of the Ottoman Dynasty, who had kept their woman hidden away there from around 1540 through the early 1900's: four hundred years of life and culture. Harems exist throughout history in different parts of the Asian world known by different names such as "*pardah*" "*curtain*" in India and in Persia "*enderun*" "*zenane*".

In the Seraglio alone, thousands of women lived and died which only each other to know of their lives. In Grand Seraglio the harem life was mysterious, beautiful and unbelievably repressive would concealed for so many centuries behind the veil.

The Grand Seraglio lays by the sea of Marmora and the Golden Horn. It was a town of five thousand people and in the harem there were hundreds of odalisques and slave girls. These people were guarded by pot-bellied and black eunuchs.

Constantinople itself was the world's most beautiful city. Standing on seven hills wrapped in the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora and the Golden Horn, water was as much a part of the city as the gently sloping forests of cypress or the bustling "*suburb*" of Pera with its tiled-roofed houses across the Horn. It was cosmopolitan too. Constaninople was a city of many peoples and a city at peace. The narrow streets of Constantinople might have been made of clay, the new houses of filmsy wood ready to crackle at the first touch of fire, but the streets hummed with the life of citizens whose skins varied in colour as much as their quardy clothes.

The Turkish Tribes including the Ottomans, practiced polygamy prior to the conquest of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, in 1453. Sultan Mehmet II, known to history as "*the conqueror*" was obsessed with his metropolis which he called İstanbul, a replica of Constantinople's only more opulent. The early Ottoman Sultans had married daughters of Anatolian governors and of the Byzantine royal family. After the conquest of Constantinople, it became customary to marry odalisques. The women in Harems except those born in it, came from all over Asia, Africa and occasionally Europe. Mehmed the conqueror built -Topkapı Place- known in the West as the Grand Seraglio.

The Seraglio was the seat of imperial power, housing thousands of people involved in the Sultan's personal and administrative service. The most private section, carefully separated from the rest of the place was the Sultan's harem, which was moved to the Seraglio for the rest of the time in 1541 with Sultana Rexolena and lasted until 1909. The Sultan had the most magnificent accommodations.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the population of the harem dropped from over a thousand women to a few hundred, because the young princes were given governorships in various provinces and left the Seraglio, escorted by their own harems. After the seventeenth century, however, with reforms in the inheritance laws that allowed the princes to live in the place with their own woman - albeit as captives in the Kafes (the Golden Cage) the harem population increased to almost two thousand.

The history of the Seraglio and its harem symbolizes the fluctuating fortunes of the empire.

Suleiman was superior to all the European powers in battle, while at home he was, with his architect Sinan, building Mosques, schools and hospitals which rivalled the works of the master builders of Europe. Suleiman had a literary bent, was a disciple of Aristotle (and his hero was Alexander the Great) he kept a daily dairy when at war, he wrote poetry when at peace.

The Venetian Envoy to Constantinople at the time described him as a man of commanding personality, tall, thin with a prominent brow, startling black eyes and an aquiline nose above long moustaches and a forked beard, which partly softened the thin mount with its trace of hereditary cruelty. He was relentless and proud.

Suleiman usually prepared to go to prayer in St. Sophia. He wore a gown of heavy silk and over it a sleeveless robe trimmed with ermine.

On his head he wore a wide oval turban with an aigrette of peacock features held in place by a clasp of diamonds.

Outside, in the first count of the Grand Seraglio, ringed by a wall three miles long, a cast of characters from the Arabian Nights awaited the moment when their lord and master would emerge and ride along its paved paths past the higgledy-piggledy work. Buildings needed to sustain a town of five thousand people- a bakery on the right, a giant wood store on the left, big enough to hold five thousand shiploads, and guarded by the Tressed Halberdiers whose headgear incorporated wigs on the either side of their faces in case they tried to steal a glance at the Sultan's odalisques when carrying wood for the harem fires.

In the harem, the word odalisque which comes from "oda" (room) and means literally "woman of the room" implying a general servant status. Odalisques with extraordinary beauty and talent were trained to become concubines learning to dance, recite poetry, play musical instruments and master the erotic arts.

A part from the Sultan feared by all was the Chief Black Eunuch, the Kishlar Aga, literally "Master of the Girls". He was a man of immense power and wealth entitled to his own retinue of slaves- for he was in control of the harem and was its only link with the outside world. He was a grotesque, ugly and castrated man dressed in his ceremonial robes of flowered silk and broad sash.

Food reached Constantinople from every quarter of the Empire. There was little alcohol but there was an abundance of sherbets. Bread for the middle classes was not so white, the Bursa flour being mixed with Greek grain.

The harem was not single building but a warren of pavilions, kiosks, villas with some terraced gardens or courtyards with pergolas, built almost at random on ground sloping from the crest of the hill at the water's edge, and it centered round the most important woman in the Ottoman Empire. The harem is the "House of Happiness" a less than religious acceptance of the master's exclusive rights of sexual foraging. It is a place in a noble and rich house guarded by eunuchs.

The harem of Suleiman the Magnificent contained three hundred odalisques living in its bewildering assortment of rooms, each one carefully trained in the art of pleasing her lord, each one proud to be bedded. Soon after one slave had borne Suleiman an heir and had become first Sultana, the Sultan was presented with a newly captured Russian Slave. He was faithful to her until he died and she caused the first crack in his dynasty.

2-The Fatal Flaws:

Suleiman came to the throne in 1520. He had a close friend Ibrahim. They ate their meals together, went boating or even they went to the same bed. Some historians said that the two men had a sexual attachment. Ibrahim, having started his career at court, later he became a Grand Vizier. It can never have crossed their minds that one day their relationship would end in tragedy fomented by harem jealousies.

Suleiman's first wife called Gulbahar (Rose of Spring) had automatically became Sultana when she bore Suleiman a son, Mustafa. In June 1523 Turkish raiders in Galicia captured a bevy of slaves, including a Russian girl called Roxelana.

Roxelana was not particularly beautiful but she had a slight, graceful figure, great charm and a sense of humour that soon enabled her to gain the complete affections of the Sultan. Suleiman fell passionately in love with her. Within a year she presented him with a son. Roxelana was now Second Sultana and third women in the harem hierarchy after the Queen mother and Rose of Spring.

When Queen Mother died Roxelana found herself the first women of the harem.

Roxelana however, was no ordinary woman and put forward arguments which the Sultan found hard to refute. To ensure Suleiman's faithfulness, Roxelana had persuaded him to marry off many younger, prettier harem slaves. Some had done very well for themselves and Roxelana argued that while they were now wives, with privileges and property of their own, she, the lover of the most exalted man of earth, was still a slave.

While Constantinople gasped in disbelief the wedding took place. As one of the clerks at the Genoese Bank of St. George wrote "This city a most extraordinary event, one absolutely unprecedented in the history of the Sultans". The Grand Signior Suleiman has taken into himself a slave woman from Russia called Roxelana, as his Empress, and there has

been great feasting, and much rejoicing in consequence. The ceremony took place within the Palace adding with obvious perplexity "There is great talic over this country about this marriage and noone can understand exactly what it *means**".

The marriage of Roxelana was the first link in the chain of event that brought about the downfall of the Ottoman Empire.

The Turks really loved fighting. As *Tractatus** puts it, they "come together for war as though they had been invited to a wedding.

**Quated in R. Davey, The Sultan and his subjects.*

**Tractatus was the title of a volume published in the fifteenth century containing miscellaneous information and sayings by a number of authours. It gave the ord "tract" to the English language invited to a wedding.*

"Suleiman was above all a warrior ruler, who watched every aspect of his country's fortunes but preferred the battlefield to the council chamber. His country men gave him the tittle of the Legislator."

Leaving back as a hero he captured Belgrade and came to Constantinople, Suleiman again attacked the Island of Rhodes and for three years he did not go to war again.

Suleiman's golden age had reached its zenith. Not only was he victorious on land but, equally remarkable was his navy that ruled the Mediterranean under the most fear-some admiral of his time-"Barbarossa, a murderous red breasted, hooked-nose pirate" whom Suleiman had cleverly persuaded to serve under the Ottoman flag. When Barbarossa died, Suleiman built for him a tomb the cunning old pirate might have chosen himself-grey granite, almost lapped by the Bosphorus, engraved with three Arabic words that meant "Death is the Captain of the Sea."

Whether this incident is apocryphal or not-it certainly seems plausible and in keeping with Turkish custom-Suleiman now acted secretly, silently, swiftly. On 15th March 1536, Ibrahim went, as he so often did to dine with his master in the Seraglio. He can have had no suspicions. For the Sultan did not confront him or challenge his honesty. Instead, historians tell us that they dined quietly, as if they would meet the next morning as usual. When Suleiman was about to retire he suggested that Ibrahim remained for the night in the adjoining room where his usual mattress was waiting for him.

He was never seen alive again. The next morning his strangled body was ground at the Seraglio gate. It was said that Suleiman could not sleep, but that he was smothered with kisses by Rexolana so that he could not hear the fight in the next room. The story is colourful, but probably apocryphal.

The last years of the Great Suleiman must have been deeply unhappy. Suleiman died as he would have wished in his tent while his troops were in the midst of fierce battle on the night of 5th September 1566. His death was kept secret for three weeks. The news of his death was revealed when the cortege reached the Forest of Belgrade near the capital. His corpse was washed and then he was buried, lying on his right side the head turned towards Mecca, near the great mosque which he and Sinan had built and the priests were commanded to recite the Koran forty times a day for forty days.

3-The Reign of the favoured Women:

In 300 years the first ten Ottomon Sultans had build up an empire of thirty million subjects speaking twenty tongues, every inch of it won by rulers who personally led their armies from conquest to conquest, and they were merciless and cruel, they were interested in the arts they included historians, architects, poets. In short, it was probably the greatest dynasty the world has ever known.

Selim had "a face rather swollen than fat and much resembling a drunkard's and within months of his accession court rumours had spread to every corner of the capital that Suleiman had not fathered the new Sultan.

Selim's first act was to banish his father's harem to Adrianople and bring in his own current favorite, the Sultana Nur Banu, who had borne his first son. Nur Banu, bided her time until Selim died and she became Queen Mother, for a very good reason: Selim was almost always drunk and took no interest in government.

As Selim's was proclaimed Sultan Murad III in December 1574, his widow Nur Banu automatically became Queen Mother and it was now that the in-fighting in the harem started in earnest, lasting for the hundred years which the Turk called "Kadilar Sultanati the reign of the favoured Women" an era in which a procession of Queen mothers and Sultanas fought at first quietly but then ferociously for wealth, privilege and power.

As Selim's first Sultana, Nur Banu had lived in a beautiful suite, its walls decorated with gold leaf, at the end of the Golden Road. Now, as

Queen Mother, she made a significant change, establishing herself nearer her son's rooms at the start of the Golden Road, near the entrance to the harem.

Murad III as not a difficult son to manage. Thin, pale of medium height with a long red beard, he had a fondness of opium; when he exchanged opium for wine, he became ruddier and much fatter. He enjoyed spending the morning with writers, poet, painter. He published "The Book of Skill".

Sokolli was the last grand vizier for a hundred years who was able to wield any power. In the twelve years since the death of Suleiman Sokolli added Cyprus, a large part of Persia, the Yemen and recaptured the province of Tunis to the Empire.

Murad became the father of 103 children, but fleeting love was one thing, devotion was another. When Nur Banu died in 1583 Baffo, without the hindrance of dominating mother in law ruled the harem.

During all these years of female squabbling Constantinople as changing, and doubtless most of the citizens outside court circles knew little of the struggle for power being waged behind the Gate of Felicity.

In their homes most Turks, even of moderate means, had a negro slave who cleaned and cooked meals over a charcoal fire, fanning the red glow with a turkey's wing. In the houses, the men always ate alone, the food being passed from the selamlık to the harem through a kind of cheap vegetable for thick soups and plenty of onions and garlic to flavour coarse meat or tripe.

Easy divorce had several curious consequences. A man could not marry a divorced woman until she had been divorced his wife twice, he could take her back. But if as sometime happened after marital tiffs, he divorced her a third time, and then realized he still loved her, she could not return to him until she had been married to someone else. Divorce often followed by remarriage.

When Murad III died in January 1595, the Venetian Envoy reported, he "lived on solid meats thick soups and sheeps" marrow and other aphrodisiacs, for he lay immersed in lust. He was fifty and had reigned for twenty years. His twenty sons and twenty seven daughters survived him and seven of his wives were pregnant when he died.

The new Sultan Mahomet III was twenty-nine, a big man with a black beard and a huge pair of fearsome moustaches, plus a streak of abnormal cruelty. He had a sense of royal dignity.

Mahomet died at the age of fifty two. He was the last Sultan ever to be trusted with liberty during the lifetime of a predecessor.

4-The Years of the Cage:

The "Kafes" was not a barred cage in the accepted sense of the word, but it was not certainly bolted. It consisted of a two storeyed grey building tucked away behind a high wall in the heart of the Grand Seraglio, almost opposite the rooms of the first Sultana. It had handsome courtyards and gardens, and its tiled walls were among the most beautiful in the Seraglio. There were no windows on the ground floor, though those on second floor looked out to sea. The odalisques never left the Cage unless one carelessly became pregnant, in which case she was immediately drowned. This happened very rarely for great care was taken to make these women barren.

Sultan Ahmed I, who succeeded Mahomet in 1603, founded the cages because he rebelled against the barbaric custom of fratricide.

During Ahmed's reign Mustafa, who succeeded him spent more than ten years in the cage, providing the first terrible evidence of its effect on human-beings, as each succeeding Sultan seemed more mad, avaricious, debauched and besotted than his predecessor. By the time Mustafa I became Sultan, he was completely demented. After three months he was deposed.

Murad IV was only ten when proclaimed Sultan in 1623 and that meant that at least the cage had not had time to break his spirit. Murad's far seeing mother Kiusem ruled during his youth. She chose his grand-viziers wisely and took one other extraordinary step for a doting mother: "She encouraged the young prince towards homosexuality".

Murad was a big man in every sense of a word, dressed almost always in blue silk, he could out-ride any man in the Empire. With all his ferocious cruelty, Murad was at least cast in the first Ottoman Sultans, and in 1638 he made his greatest expedition of war against the Persians, to take Bagdad which, by tradition, could only be captured by a sovereign in person.

Ibrahim who was twenty-four had been immured in the Cage since he was two. He had lived through the reigns of Mustafa, Osman and Murad. He knew nothing of politics of war and had existed for twenty-two years in mortal terror of the bowstring, so that when the soldiers came to announce his succession he refused point-blank to believe them, convinced that he was about to be the most detestable and debauched of all the Ottoman Sultans. A picture of him shows the bleared countenance of a drunkard, his turban tipped crazily to one side.

The girls in the harem were murdered in batches, tied up in sacks weighted with stones and carried to the Water Gate where each batch was

loaded on a small boat, with a larger boat tied to it so the eunuchs could pull the frailer craft away from the shore and then by a dextrous jerking of a rope, make the women in the sacks topple off.

5-The Rule of the Viziers:

The relations between Turkey and Europe-the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire were merely nonentities for the next century and a half. The Sultans still maintained their courts with exaggerated splendour unmatched in Europe (with Louis XIV, the Sun King of France, running them a close second). They still had their whims.

Mahomet IV, who now succeeded to the throne in 1648, inherited a great statesman to guide him as Grand Vizier. This was the first of the famous Kiuprili Family, chosen by his mother as Mahomet was under age.

There was a savage twist of irony to the situation, for despite the qualities of the grand viziers, (give or take the odd black sheep) this was a time in which the Ottomans faced one crushing defeat after another, an era in which all fears of their military prowess vanished as limb after limb as lopped off the Empire.

The first of the Kiuprili grand viziers was an Albanian called Mahomet who started his working life as a kitchen boy in the Sultan's palace, and on the advice of the Sultan Mahomet's mother, the Queen Mother Tarkham became Grand Vizier in 1656 at the ripe old age of seventy.

The Sultan was hunting near Adrianople but he rushed back to Constantinople. The Grand Vizier lived simply in a comparatively modest palace with only a small harem but the Sultan made his way there and heart-broken, told Kiuprili, that he would willingly give him ten years of his life if he could, and when he asked the old man his advice Kiuprili had no hesitation in giving it. He urged the Sultan never to listen to the advice of women, never to choose a minister who was too wealthy. And so Ahmed at twenty-six years older than the Sultan became Grand vizier and ruled the country firmly for the next fifteen years.

Mahomed admired the art and took a keen interest in the historians compiling the annals of his reign-particularly those writing eulogistic accounts of every bird or beast he slaughtered. Among his favorites as the Turkish historian. Abdi, who had to tread warily, for the Sultan had a sordonic touch of humor.

The Sultan sometimes did not visit Constantinople for months at a time, but the Seraglio was, of course, the centre of government, and the

thousand of officials (and sycophants) who lived or worked there must have had gargantuan appetites, for around this time a French traveller, Aubrey de la Motraye, compiled a list of the Seraglio's annual meat supplies: 60,000 head of mutton, 20,000 of veal, 200,000 fowls, 100,000 pigeons, 3,000 turkeys. The quantity of other foods needed for the Seraglio was eventually astonishing.

According to one historian "Mahomed is of a man not unhappy indeed rather jovial and according to some historians, a homosexual. "His manner changed when he was at Adrianople away from Royal chores, for he hated Constantinople violently. Firstly it kept him away from the Chase, and secondly it remained him of rival claimant to his throne.

Ahmed Kiuprili died a few days after the peace treaty as signed and it seemed obvious that his brother Zade who had displayed all the Kiuprili qualities, should succeed him but for the only time in his reign Sultan Mahomed interfered.

Zade, Kiuprili, Ahmed's brother was by now Grand-Vizier, and insisted on deposing Mahomed after thirty-nine years in the Cage became Sultan, and Mahomed occupied his comfortable prison for the rest of his life.

The climax of this era was now almost at hand, brought about by one of the stupidest of all the stupid Ottoman wars when Osman's successor, Mustafa III came to the throne in 1757 and rashly decided to pit his strength against the Russians, setting off on the northward march burdened with a staggering load of supplies.

PART II

THE SICK MAN OF EUROPE

6-The French Sultana

No great empire declines for one reason alone, and the Ottoman Empire's downhill course was certainly not caused only by the debauchery of its sultans, though they were largely responsible for the internal decay which slowly ate into the efficiency and honesty of Suleiman the magnificent's system of government by slave educated in his tribute school. As the "rules" were relaxed by succeeding sultans-as nepotism crept in the government could no longer depend on them absolutely. Much the same thing happened with the Janissaries once they were allowed to marry.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, 59 years old Abdul Hamid I, who had been Sultan for eleven years, received a gift which delighted and rejuvenated him, for it consisted of a golden haired French girl with a witty, upturned nose below large blue eyes, and a perfectly formed Cupid's bow of a mouth above a determined chin: Her name was Aimee Debuq de Rivery, and her closest friend was her dark haired, amusing cousin, also from Martinique. Though the two would never meet again, both girls were destined to become the power behind the thrones of great rules.

Aimee spend the rest of her life in the harem. Selim was about the same age as Aimee and when Abdul Hamid died in 1789 and Selim III proclaimed Sultan, he was already a passionate devotee of her French liberalism. The relationship between Selim and Aimee provides a fascinating question, to which no historian has been able to find an answer.

Selim's Empire was now in a decline which seemed impossible to check. But at least, to Aimee and Selim there was always France to fall back on. Selim was among the first rulers in Europe to recognise the republic. After some heart searching, Selim made history by appointing the first Turkish ambassador to France in 1797 though Aimee had been horrified by the executions of Louis XVI and Marine Antoinette.

According to the historians if Aimee had not had the foresight to install a professional toxicologist in the Seraglio, Mahomed would have died. And he nearly did die when the unresolved quarrel between Selim and the Janissaries broke into tragic and open revolt in the summer of 1807. The main body of the Janissaries was with the army fighting on the

Danube. Selim foolishly felt he was strong enough to increase his New Army by trying to draft some of the youngest and best Janissaries into it.

Mahmud had appointed Bairactar as a Grand Vizier who liked good living and was fast asleep when an odalisque after a splendid banquet when the Janissaries struck Mahmud was in his difficult times he was forced to yield to every demand of the Janissaries and he was compelled to put his name to an edict repealing Selim's reforms. Eventually Janissaries ruled the Empire and they did whatever they want.

In June 1826, there was an event in the Turkish history called "Auspicious Event" Mahmud called a meeting of the Divan for he was determined that any action he took would be within the bounds of law. The ideal solution would be to provoke the Janissaries into revolt and this is what he set out to do.

By the time, Mahmud died in 1839, the Empire had lost Greece Egypt and was involved in wars with France, England and Russia. He left the Empire stronger than he found it. For despite the overwhelming difficulties he faced, he at least made himself master in his own house. The French Mother Aimee, who had so inspired him died in the harem where she lived for thirty-three years, and as Aimee's life slipped away the grief-stricken Mahmud made what was, for a devout Moslem ruler of a Moslem Empire, a decision of courage and love. In addition to all of these, Aimee died in the faith to which she had been born.

7-The Road to the Crimea:

Abdulmejid was sixteen when his father Mahmud died in 1839. Two years after Victoria ascended the British throne his mother Besma, the bath attendant had always been convinced that too much drink had hastened her husband's death. A simple country girl, Besma did not realize that sexual excesses were just as dangerous as over indulgence in alcohol, and she cheerfully encouraged her son to pleasure the ladies of the harem.

Abdulmejid was not a vicious or dissolute man, he had none of earlier traces of hereditary insanity, he was determined to enjoy his good fortune. He decided to build up a family home on the shores of Bosphorus. This was the Palace of Dolmabache "The Filled-up Garden" guarded by thousand of slaves in the time of Suleiman. Abdulmejid built a beautiful theater in which like a pantomime in reserve the leading lady would be a pretty page who would fall in love with an equally handsome boy.

France saw a danger of her superiority in the Mediterranean vanishing if the Russians took Constantinople. Austria feared a land

attack if the Russians became all powerful. Therefore, Europe made one last desperate bid for peace. All the European powers except Russia met in Vienna and produced a formula for settling the religious differences between Russia and Turkey.

8- The Madman of Dolmabache:

The three year Crimean War had affected the Turkish life. There were lots of battles such as Barcelona, Inkerman, Sevastopol. In these battles many Turks did fight and many died half starved, they preferred the fighting and misery to the horrifying spectacle of unveiled women like Florence Nightingale nursing wounded soldiers in Scutari.

Hostilities ended in 1856 with the Treaty of Paris by which Turkish territory was left virtually untouched. Russia abandoned her religious claims; the Black Sea was opened to merchant vessels, however, were those in which Europe in effect promised not to meddle in the internal affairs of Turkey.

By the time Abdulmejid died and was succeeded by his brother Abdul Aziz in 1861, the Ottoman Empire had managed to achieve the double distinction of being not only morally bankrupt but almost financially as well.

The Empire was ripe for revolt. The misery of the majority of the people had been exacerbated by two bad harvests. There was bound to be an explosion. On 21 April 1876 the Bulgarians long seething with disaffection broke into open revolt. Bulgaria had been a part of the Ottoman Empire since 1396. Its language, like that of Russia was Slavic.

After Abdul Aziz has deposed, his brother Abdul Hamid II came to power.

9- The City of Intrigue:

Abdul Hamid II was thirty-four when he became Sultan in 1876 and he was the last supreme despot of the Ottoman Empire. Born in 1842 the second son of Abdul Mejid, his mother was an Armenian professional dancer before entering the harem. She died when Abdul Hamid was only seven.

Constantinople was changing. The first telegraph lines were functioning. The first petrol and oil had been imported. The first steam engine had been set up in the capital. The French Lycée had opened in Galata and was bringing Turk and foreigner together. The influence of the West had spread in other ways. The flowing oriental robes, with their splendid colours, had long since gone, and much of the life of oriental

magnificence had also vanished, as it so often does, with progress. And as the new Sultan vacillated between yesterday and tomorrow, Constantinople, sunk in a morass, lost its colour, its spice of life, and reverted to a city of the dark ages; it became a city of suspicion and intrigue.

Abdul Hamid was a loyal Ottoman. He was furious at what he regarded as an impertinent interference in home affairs.

On 24 April 1877 the Czar declared war on the Ottoman Empire. Any territorial ambitions as usual masked by the pretence that this was to be Italy war to save Christianity a war between the Cross and the Crescent. Constantinople was in chaos. Yet as Russian's European troops marched across the Danube, confident they would soon be at the gates of Constantinople, one stumbling block halted them- a sleepy little town, lying in a valley twenty miles south of the river, the scene of one of the most heroic defensive struggles in the history of war. This town was called **Plevna**.

10- The Siege of Plevna:

The peaceful little Bulgarian town of 17 thousand people where the last great battle between Russia and Turkey was fought in the summer and winter of 1877, lay in a deep valley, the hillsides covered with vineyards and fields of Indian corn almost ripe for harvesting.

Osman Pasha was at forty, short, taciturn man. He had a commanding, dignified presence and a sense of iron discipline, and at dawn on 13 July his army of fifty thousand men set off for Plevna, 120 miles away. On reaching Plevna, on 19 July Osman Pasha toured the hills and scattered villages that encircled the valley and concluded that, apart from nature's ramparts, Plevna was totally undefended. Osman's first task was to dig trenches and redoubts.

Before the end of July, Plevna had been transformed into a fortified town, and its defenders were standing to arms, each infantry man in the redoubts was issued with cartridges and an iron ration of biscuits and coffee; casks of drinking water and plenty of food were stored in each redoubt. Now there was nothing to do but wait for the first assault. Plevna itself was as normal as could be expected though no one could enter or leave.

The last and gruesome echo of the heroic siege of Plevna appeared in, of all places, a Bristol newspaper. It consisted of one paragraph that escaped general notice in England.

11- The Murder of a Patriot:

Now the road to Constantinople lay open. And to Abdul Hamid another dimension was added to his fear of assassination-the nightmare of total defeat of Russian troops stalking terror of death had increased. In many rooms he had built special cupboards with glass doors though perhaps few realized that it faced the door.

By the middle of January 1878, the war was all but ended, for the fall of Plevna had released the bulk of the Czar's European troops.

The half mad Sultan banned the word "Armenian" in all newspapers, even school textbooks, which in many cases had to be reprinted. When he suddenly discovered that a man who for years had regulated the hundreds of clocks in Yildizt was an Armenian, he reached for a revolver, and would have shot him had he not run for his life. Many honest Moslems felt thoroughly ashamed of the manner in which Armenians were treated.

Perhaps the Turks liked the Armenians because they were at heart oriental, nearer the Turks in ideas and habits than the Greeks or Albanians so that they felt, like Moltke that "An Armenian is but a baptised Turk."

12- The Brave and the Damned:

The Armenian massacres had not been lated episodes, but an attempt at genocide, sustained on and off with varying savagery for three years. The effect on people was a sense of shame that mounted each-time evidence of a new artrocity was unfolded. Abdul Hamid had earned himself the title of " Abdul the Damned"

On 13 April 1909 troops in Constantinople revolted and a counter-revolution was proclaimed. It did not appear to have any leader, for Abdul Hamid kept carefully in the background. All members of the Committee Union and Progress were forced to flee and if Abdul Hamid had had the courage to come out into the open he might have kept his throne. He did not and lost all. On 23 April, a cold, bright spring morning as Abdul Hamid was dressing for the Friday prayers, he heard the sound of gunfire.

Many relatives were never traced. Some girls disappeared. The rest made their way to the old Grand Seraglio Palace, where they joined the ranks and discarded concubines from past imperial harems. It was comfortable, at least and seduced from the problems of outside world.

This was the end of the harem life, the last link with the excesses and debauchery of an era that had closed. The new dawn had broken.

PART III

THE ALTERNATIVE DESPOTS:

13- The Unholy trinity:

As the Young Turks stumbled blindly on to the totally unfamiliar stage of democracy, three men ruled the destinies of the Empire. They were Talaat, Djemel and Enver each destined to transform a dawn of high promise into a fatal nightmare before dying by violence in distant lands.

The power behind the Committee of Union Progress for most of the disastrous years between 1908 and 1918 was Talaat Bey. He was a man of such enormous energy and a man of Turkish Empire. Enver Bey was different. He was only twenty-seven when he stormed the barricades to depose Abdul Hamid and was above all the others the man who captured the imagination of people, a soldier renowned for audacity in battle, with dark good looks, clean cut features, unmarred by a single wrinkle so that, he seemed almost effeminate.

Enver became the Minister of War so he could act in secret, though he took care to hedge his bets with diplomats.

Towards the end of October, the Goeben and Breslau which were the names of ships steamed up the Black Sea and without warning, opened fire on Odessa and Sevastopol, sinking all the shipping they could find. Though they were Turkish ships-in theory anyway-Djemel, the Minister of Marine, knew nothing of the event until a messenger interrupted his game of cards at the Cercle d'Orient. The British, French and Russian Ambassadors could not stand any more. The following day Turkey was in the war.

14- The Rebel :

Mustafa Kemal was thirty-eight when in May 1919 his moment of destiny arrived. All his life so far, as a student, a plotter, a soldier, showed him to be in the words of one biographer "a man born out of clue season, an anachronism a throwback to the Tatars of the Steppes, a fierce elemental force of a man." When he was twelve he passed the entrance examination for the Salonika Military School and within six years was attending the War College at Constantinople.

When Mustafa Kemal arrived at Samsun, it was with the complete conviction that he could form a government land muster an army powerful enough to oust not only the supine Turkish Government but also the victorious occupation armies at Britian, France and Italy. It was a stupendous challenge.

Within a week of landing at Samsun, Mustafa Kemal moved into the town of Amassia astride the main road linking East and West Turkey. Here he called a series of secret meetings of army and civilian leaders. Mustafa Kemal then suggested a secret congress at Sivas "which is the safest place in Anatolia for the purpose" where free from interference, delegates could assert the Turkish nations rights before the world.

Mustafa Kemal was immediately arrested every British officer he could find in Anatolia. Those deputies who escaped made their way to Angora where on 23rd April 1920 the Grand National Assembly of Turkey held its first session. Mustafa Kemal was elected President and issued to the world his statement of faith.

On 9th September Mustafa Kemal made his triumphant entry into Smyrna, driving the last few miles at the head of a convoy of cars decked with boughs of laurel, though crowds of cheering, weeping, praying, hysterical Turks.

It was, perhaps Mustafa Kemal's greatest moment of triumph, but it was blotted by an insane act.

15-The Fire of Smyrna:

Smryna was unlike any other city in the Ottoman Empire. Blessed by a benign climate, becked by a rich fertile hinterland where even the poorest peasant at least had more than enough fruit, bread and cheese, it was the heard of an area drench by the perfumes of almond trees, mimossa and oleander-Turk, Armenian Jew, Greek, European made up the population of a sea-port city.

On 10th September Mustafa Kemal entered the city. His uniform bore no badges of rank, and he immediately made for the Greek government building on the steps like a carpet. Mustafa Kemal refused to walk on it, protesting "That is a symbol of a countries independence." Then the fire in Smyrna had started. The towers of the Greek churches, the domes of the mosques the flat roofs of the houses were shrouded a curtain of flame.

It is impossible even today to say, with certainty how many people died in Smyrna fire.

16-The Dictator:

Sakkaria had been a victory of profound consequence perhaps not yet appreciated in Europe. Smyrna was a flashing demonstration of revenge.

Mustafa Kemal was unanimously elected president, though there were nearly a hundred abstentions. As a salute of 101 guns celebrated the birth of Turkish Republic on 29th October 1923, Mustafa Kemal became the most Powerful man in Turkey.

After that Turkish became the official language of the country and Angora became the official capital.

Mustafa Kemal abolished the harem and polygamy life and he provided another startling innovation – coeducational classes in cons, to study nude in art. He also imported western classical music and decided to compare the merits of Turkish and European music.

His other reforms were for reaching.

Mustafa Kemal died at five minutes past nine on 10th November 1938 in a room overlooking the Bosphorus. He was fifty-seven. For three nights the body of Atatürk lay in state in Dolmabache the ebony coffin covered with the flag of Turkey. The catafaque guarded by officers with drawn swords as hundreds of thousands of Turks filed past.

Atatürk had expressed a wish to be buried in his beloved Ankara and he buried in Ankara at Anıtkabir.

Lord Kinross describes him in Atatürk as "transported his country from Middle Ages to the threshold of the modern era and beyond".

CONCLUSION

In *Lords of the Golden Horn* Noel Barber wrote on some events that happened during the Ottoman Empire exaggerated them and often they were in a very biased manner not true.

In his book he wrote about harem. He says, “ *..Away from home for long period they found it much simpler to lock their women up when they were not there, and guard them with eunuchs.*” However, it is not true. The Sultans did not lock their women but the women lived separately divided into task groups

Noel Barber also wrote about divorce. He says, “*But easy divorce had several curious consequences. A man could not marry a divorced woman until she had been divorced from her husband for four and a half months. If a man divorced his wife twice, he could take her back. But if, as sometimes happened after marital tiffs, he divorced her a third time, and then realised he still loved her, she could not return to him until she had been married to someone else. This was meant as a check against abusing easy divorce but it soon produced a professional intermediary willing to marry the lady for one night. He was usually old, paid for his services, and expected not to be over enthusiastic in the performance of his duties.*”

In its true way, there is a polygamy which means having more than one wife. If a husband wants to get rid of any of his wives, he can divorce them with relative ease by saying, before a kadi(judge) “I divorce thee” three times. A wife can not initiate a divorce; she has no rights.

Barber also wrote about Atatürk. He says, “ *Kemal’s reaction was to rush to the other end of the female spectrum. “Society women” were beneath contempt and he turned instead to the more obliging ladies of the brothels. For months he hardly ever returned to his own bed before dawn. He had no work of consequence to occupy him. He hated his job. It was far more pleasant to spend the night in the beds of ladies...*”

However Mustafa Kemal worked hard and not interested so much in the ladies. He used his mind to do best for his nation.

Noel Barber says about Atatürk; “ *He was more often ill natured than pleasant, and if displeased, would be harsh and merciless. He also changed very rapidly in looks. One day he would seem young and full of life, and the next, ten years older, lined and tired...*”

He sometimes wrote positive. For example; “ *After abolishing the harem and polygamy he provided another startling innovation –*

coeducational classes in Constantinople, to study the nude in art. He also imported western classical music..."

1. B. ...
1904 ...

2. ...
... Limited, 1913

3. ...
... 1914



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THE OTTOMAN DYNASTY

This Volume opens during the reign of the tenth sultan of the Ottomans dynasty, Suleiman the Magnificent.

Part 1: The years of decline

	<i>Date of accession</i>
10 Suleiman I	1520
11 Selim II	1566
12 Murad III	1574
13 Mahomet III	1595
14 Ahmed I	1603
15 Mustafa I	1617
(deposed)	
16 Osman II	1618
(murdered)	
16 Mustafa I (second accession)	1622
(strangled)	
17 Murad IV	1623
18 Ibrahim	1640 (deposed)
19 Mahomet IV	1648 (deposed)
20 Suleiman II	1687
21 Ahmed II	1691
22 Mustafa II	1695 (deposed)
23 Ahmed III	1703 (deposed)
24 Mahmud I	1730
25 Osman III	1754
26 Mustafa III	1757
27 Abdul Hamid I	1773

Part 2: The sick man of Europe

28 Selim III	1789 (deposed)
29 Mustafa IV	1807 (deposed)
30 Mahmud II	1808
31 Abdul Mejid	1839
32 Abdul Aziz	1861 (deposed)
33 Murad V	1876 (deposed)
34 Abdul Hamid II	1876 (deposed)

Part 3: The alternative despots

35 Mahomet V	1908 (deposed)
36 Mahomet VI	1915 (deposed)