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IDEOLOGY AND HISTORY, IDENTITY AND ALTERITY: THE ARAB IMAGE OF THE TURK FROM THE ABBASIDS TO MODERN EGYPT

This article is dedicated to the memory of Alexander Schölch, who is remembered by his friends and colleagues as a man of rare quality and exemplary scholarship.

A “nation” has been cynically but not inaptly defined as a society united by a common error as to its origin and a common aversion to its neighbors.¹

I

At the end of the 1950s Khālid Muḥammad Khālid, whose importance for the history of modern Islamic thought and sentiment can hardly be overestimated, propagated the rather preposterous thesis that the terms “tyrant” (derived from Greek tyrannos) and “Türân,” the customary (Persian) word used for the homeland of the Turks, were etymologically and, as a corollary, also semantically akin.² What was so irritating about this anti-Turkish libel was not so much its insipidity as the reaction or, more to the point, absence of a reaction to such and similar statements in the Arab public. The lonely voices of historians such as Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjīd³ and Abdallah Laroui,⁴ who from very different ideological vantage points chided their Arab audience in the late 1960s for foolishly blaming all their troubles on the Turks, remained unheeded for a very long time.⁵

Only in the last ten to fifteen years has this situation changed. Turks and Arabs are gradually beginning to realize that mutual feelings of hatred and inferiority are products of the past and that a serious occupation with this common past is required if a new beginning in the relations between these two peoples is to be successful, not only on the economic and political but also on the emotional plane. Turks tend to be particularly sensitive to criticism of their role in Arab history. And many Arab intellectuals persistently refuse to see the elements of prejudice and exaggeration in their own traditional attitudes toward the Turks.

The subject of the following paper will be the image of the Turk as it developed among the Arabs through the centuries and the effects this image had, and continues to have, on the self-image of both peoples even today. My arguments will be restricted to the realm of ideology. My contention is that in this sphere of transferring, and rationalizing, historical experience into attitudes,
“the Turks” have played for “the Arabs” both a specific and a surprisingly consistent role through the centuries. The topic is not novel. The Turkish lawyer İlhan Arsel, in his impressive encyclopedia of Turkish-Arab relations entitled *Arab milliyetçiliği ve Türkler*, also gives due attention to the labels attached to the Turks by the Arabs, yet he does not make a systematic study of the nature of the ethnic stereotype involved.

II

Ethnic stereotypes are symbols. They serve as rationalizations of underlying and—to a certain degree—perfectly normal interethnic prejudices. They are derived from specific social, political, and cultural conditions. As such they are, at least in principle, subject to change and effacement. Yet when these conditions remain constant over long stretches of time, images that one group has formed of another under specific circumstances can actually achieve autonomy and begin to be regarded as mirrors of historical reality. Owing to their intrinsic inertia, these images (as well as the underlying prejudices) easily survive the temporary disappearance of the factors that originally conditioned and sustained them. “They are as true as tradition, and as pervasive as folklore.” And finally, if properly manipulated, they begin to generate a dynamic of their own that may well transcend the limits of pure ideology. Recent European history is full of examples of such devastatingly effective ethnic and racial clichés.

In the case of the Arab image of the Turk discussed in detail below, one can say: A profoundly conventional image of the uncouth and savage, yet at the same time brave and upright Turkish “barbarian” changes over the centuries into a negative—“the Turk” is distorted into a cruel and despotic power addict who, because of his innate character, is devoid of any cultural refinement. Eventually the Arabs (who, n.b., became aware of themselves as a nation in the modern sense only very late) began to relegate the real nature of their relationship with the Turks to a collective unconscious and covered it with a taboo. “Turan” and “tyrant” were equated, with the consequences noted above.

Now, which were the political and social constants that over the ages contrived to nourish and energize a characteristic image of the Turk? In the first place, Turkish rule over Arab subjects. “[One] regarded a non-Turk in authority as an oddity,” as Bernard Lewis has curtly and poignantly formulated this state of affairs. In the central lands of Islam, for one millennium, rule meant alien rule, and alien rule meant Turkish rule.

Contemporary Arab observers were keenly aware of this unusual chain of continuity. In Seljuq Iraq the guards of Baghdad and Samarra were associated with Toghril Beg, and in Mamluk Egypt and Syria two hundred years later Toghril Beg was connected with al-Zähir Baybars, both men being founders of a *dawla turkiyya*. And as a correlate to power there was, on a second and loftier—or rather, more ideological—level another function ceded to the Turks from the time the Arabs began to shun (or to be excluded from) military responsibilities in the early ABBASID period—that is, the role of the *mujāhidūn*, the defenders of the (orthodox) Islamic faith.
In the perception of the Arabs, "the Turks" (Arabic: al-Turk) existed as a more or less constant and homogeneous ethnic group through the centuries, in whatever different roles and under whatever different names they appeared in their own lands. The terms "Turk" and "Turkish" seem to have evoked similar associations among the Arabs—at least those of the Mashriq—through the Middle Ages and the early modern period. Quite naturally, they tended to neglect or belittle the geographical and linguistic differentiations within the Turkic peoples whom they encountered as strangers in their own Arab environment; the farther away from Turkish lands they were, the more they were ignored. Conversely, non-Turkish ethnic entities that were assimilated to a Turkish life-style and came from regions inhabited predominantly by Turks (e.g., the Circassians and Abkhaz in the Mamluk period) were all lumped together under the term Türk/Atıııııık.13 We know of a similar extension of the notion "Turk" to denote Muslims in general from Hindu India and the Christian Balkans.14 And if we generalize from the available data on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Egypt, even very distinct internal stratifications and oppositions within Turkish ruling castes (in this particular period an Ottoman cultured elite, the rūmās, faced the "Turks" [eträk], unruly and uneducated low-class soldiers from Anatolia,15 whom the former regarded as foreigners [ejnebi] in relation to themselves16) were of little or no relevance to contemporary Arab observers. After all, both subgroups were foreign and shared "Turkish" rule and power over them.17

This homogeneity of a people in space and time is a well-known postulate of traditional Islamic ethnography. Both al-Jāhiz18 and Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī19 emphasize the unchanging and innate "national" traits of an umma,20 a people. Good and bad qualities are for them in balance;21 exceptions to the rule, such as a cowardly Turk, a covetous Arab, an uncivilized Persian, or a choleric Negro22 only serve to prove the validity of the cliché.

What are the main characteristics of such ethnic stereotypes and how do they operate? On the basis of the material investigated—necessarily limited in scope and perspective—I suggest that they share four closely intertwined qualities: They are (1) artificial, (2) selective and relative, (3) universal, and above all (4) negative and instrumental.

1. They are artificial. As mentioned above, they reflect—and serve to justify—existing prejudices. They are not adopted and employed on the basis of an ever-renewed critical analysis of the object (i.e., the "other" people with their changing inventory of national characteristics24) but rather because they correspond to certain a priori expectations that are projected onto the foreign group. Perception is governed by these expectations, or rather prejudices, not vice versa. And such collective prejudices have a tendency to find themselves more often confirmed than disproved.25 A courageous Egyptian or Italian soldier is known
to have had, and still to have, a harder time proving his personal bravery than
does his Turkish or Israeli counterpart because he is "not supposed" to be
brave, according to the current cliché.

2. Ethnic clichés—both hétéro- and autostereotypes—are selective and rela-
tive. The inability to understand an alien cultural system in its intrinsic
equilibrium leads to the isolation of particular traits that are familiar to the
observer and of particular weight in his value system. These traits are then
singled out. Yet, depending on the external judge, those traits selected can be
very different or even diametrically opposed. Thus the Uzbek warriors—at
whose attacks in the sixteenth century their southern neighbors, the Persians,
quivered with fear—appeared lazy to the Qazaqs, their cognate neighbors in the
northern steppes.

3. As mentioned briefly above, ethnic stereotypes are universal. Let us take
our present example: The Arab stereotype of the manly, fearless, proud, and yet
at the same time unsettled, savage, and uncouth Turk. This stereotype is not
specific to the Turks but rather characteristic of the prototypical nomadic
barbarian. We find the same paradigmatic list of qualities in descriptions by the
ancient Greeks and Chinese of their neighbors on the steppes. And from the
time of the Roman poet Lucanus (d. A.D. 65) onward, the Germans have been
ostracized by their more refined western and southern neighbors for their
"Teutonic fury" (furor teutonicus). (Incidentally, when German knights en-
counter Seljuq-Turkish warriors during the Crusades in Anatolia, apparently
the Turks did more justice to this shared martial stereotype than did the
Germans: upon their return home, some German knights forged genealogical
legends asserting common Turkish-German origins, so impressed had they been
by the fighting spirit and martial prowess of the Turkish ghāzīs.)

4. Finally, ethnic stereotypes are instrumental and—as heterostereotypes—
predominantly negative. Besides having a delineating function, they are par-
ticularly effective and insidious vehicles of reduction. In them and through them,
the complex reality is radically concentrated into a few striking and, for the most
part, opprobrious characteristics ("ethnophaulisms") which, by contrast, en-
hance the autostereotype and can serve handily as ammunition in the arsenal of
ideological warfare. Once you have painted your adversary in the darkest black
you no longer have to apologize for attacking him fiercely over harmless issues
and conflicts of interest that, taken in isolation, would never justify such
aggressiveness. Derogatory stereotypes are generated and applied by a given
group in order to provide a psychological release in its dealings with another
group that is feared and felt to be superior to it in certain respects. In a rapidly
changing world that is difficult to cope with, xenophobia, fear of the other,
evokes such defense mechanisms. By banishing one's opponent, who has become
an object of fear, one believes one has regained security. A stereotype thus stands
for a suppressed and unfulfilled wish for vengeance. The English have the cruel
saying "Give a dog an ill name and hang him." This refers to someone who no
longer dares face his primary opponent in an open confrontation.

Certainly an ethnic cliché tells us much about the frustrations and troubles of
those who feel compelled to use it—in our case the Arabs—and very little, if
anything, about those on whose backs it was stuck, i.e., the Turks. In the
following historical survey, we shall therefore see only Arab actors on the stage, although it is the Turk who is the constant object of the excoriations. The important reverse image, that is, the one the Turks themselves created for the Arabs, can with some justification be passed over, for it was, at least in general terms, coined by rulers in reference to their powerless subjects and therefore lacks the apologetic explosiveness of its Arab counterpart.  

In the following pages I will undertake a historical tour d’horizon of Arab-Turkish relations and their impact on ideology. The material consulted is, quite unavoidably, exemplary and selective. The crucial first phase was the ʿAbbasid period. In the ninth century the image of the Turkish ʿilj, “barbarian,” certainly reflected reality. Alien Turkish pretorians, most of them former slaves, had usurped military power in the caliphate. In a vain effort to escape Turkish tutelage, the caliphs fled to the new capital of Samarra. These ruthless pretorian guards elicited feelings of horror, failure and, at the same time, haughty contempt among the cultured citizens of Baghdad. The poet Ibn Lankak al-ʿBaṣrī (d. 300/912–913) left us an anti-Turkish poem reflecting this mixture of arrogance and subdued awe toward the Turkish officers in ninth-century Iraq. “The free are gone, they are destroyed and lost. Time has placed me among ‘barbarians.’ I am told: You spend too much time at home, and then I answer: It is no longer fun to walk in the streets, for whom do I meet when looking around? Monkeys on horseback,” he laments. Al-Maṣṣūdī, another contemporary, is more judicious: “The Turks have become the commanders. To them everyone owes attention and obedience,” he curtly summarizes the metamorphosis of the Turks from exotic foreigners into foreign lords. And the universal image of the barbarian served to make living under Turkish rule more easily tolerable.

But one must not forget that the term “barbarian,” conveyed not only negative but also very positive connotations. Not only the martial prowess of the Turks but also their loyalty and devotion were admired. In his famous treatise on the merits of the Turks, al-Jāḥiẓ stresses not only Turkish magnanimity and pride—“rather a beggar by force than a king by excuse”—but also, to use a modern word, their patriotism (a curious attribute for a nomadic people at first glance), their natural intelligence, and their religious sensibility. Calling them ʿrāb al-ʿajam, “bedouins among the non-Arabs,” he grants them the esteemed qualities of independence and versatility that distinguished the nomadic ancestors of the Arabs from other peoples. Ibn Khaldūn takes up this topos and extols the naturalness of both the Arab and Turkish ways of life.

Medieval Muslim ethnographers relate the warlike spirit of the Turks (as well as their abstinence from the arts and sciences) to their origins in the cold and humid zone on the margins of the inhabited world. We find this theory fully elaborated in al-Maṣṣūdī’s histories, in Ibn Rustah’s and Ibn al-Faqīh’s geographies, as well as in Ibn al-Nafīs’ famous Theologus autodidactus of the late thirteenth century. Ibn al-Nafīs sees the bellicose and ferocious steppe people of the East as instruments of God’s punishment of his community.
for abandoning the “right path.” The famous hadīth49 “leave the Turks as long as they leave you” (utrukū ‘l-Atrak ma tarakūkum), which reflects the political situation in ninth-century Iraq,50 gave rise to manifold and sometimes quite outlandish interpretations. Were the Turks perhaps the twenty-fourth tribe of the people of Gog and Magog whom Alexander had not been able to contain behind the huge wall he erected in the East?51 Certainly fear and awe dominated the discussion about these Turkish newcomers to the Arab lands in the ninth and tenth centuries. The apocryphal hadīth “if they love you, they eat you, if they are angry at you, they kill you”52 (in aḥabbūka akalīka, in ghaḍibūka qatalīka), refers to Turks and speaks for itself. Fighting the Turks, “whose shoes are made of hair, whose eyes are small and whose noses are flat . . .”53 will have to take place before the Hour of Judgment arrives, as Abū Hurayra quotes the Prophet Muhammad in Abū Dā‘ūd’s Šaḥīḥ sunan al-Muṣṭafā. In Nu‘aym b. Hammād al-Marwazi’s famous Book of Strife (Kitāb al-fitān) the apocalyptic Turks dominate the last and longest chapter.54 Inscriptions on monuments as old as the pyramids of Gizeh warn of manumitted slaves55—i.e., Turks—and of the oppressions they would bring to Egypt.56 And it cannot be ruled out that those of al-Mutanabbi’s verses that chide him “who makes the slave his master” as particularly miserable may refer also to Turkish domination.57

Yet in spite of all of their sufferings under the Turkish yoke, there still remained, during the ‘Abbasid and Buyid periods, one domain in which the Turk had not yet become a rival to the Arab—Islam, or, more explicitly, Arab guardianship over the community of believers in spiritual matters. The Arabs, the people God had chosen to receive His final revelation in their own language, the people from whose ranks alone the divinely inspired Imam of the Muslims could spring, this people certainly could not be worried about its privileged religious status—and surely not in comparison with those illiterate warriors of the far north who still displayed the vestiges of a heathen-Shamanistic tradition and who could not even boast of a pre-Islamic prophet of their race to grant them a genuinely Islamic legitimacy. In this respect the Persians were much more serious competitors for the Arabs. They could claim that Muhammad was born under the rule of their just and wise Emperor Anushirwan, and they could produce Isaac, “God’s sacrifice,” as their hallowed alleged ancestor.58

VI

In the eleventh century, however, Arab primacy over the Turks ceased to be undisputed. The Turkish (Oghuz, Ghuzz) Seljuqs—no longer a group of individual Turkish military strongmen, as in the days of al-Mu‘taṣim and al-Mutawakkil, but a whole tribal confederation—established their protectorate over the ‘Abbasid caliphate. They imposed a new taxation system that accommodated their own tribal structures and needs. And the gradual cultural emancipation of the Turks followed suit. They slowly became aware of their linguistic and cultural identity (as well as dignity) within the umma Muḥammadiyya and began to emulate the Iranians in their search for a place of their own in Islamic history.59
More important still, the Turks assumed religious authority themselves, even if only indirectly. They introduced the institution of the sultanate and thus appropriated religious and political prerogatives that had previously been reserved for the Arab caliph. The new functions that were transferred from the caliph to the sultan were epitomized, by al-Ghazāli, in the notion of *najda*. Najda, “intrepidity,” denotes leadership in the fight against heresy and the external foes of Islam. It was only reluctantly that the traditionalist Arab ulama went along with the policy of orthodox renewal pursued by the Seljuq sultans and their Iranian advisers, although this renewal in itself should have deserved their individual support. Rather, there were cases when they sought for casuistic arguments aimed at disputing the legal competence and the probity of the Seljuq sultan and went so far as to disgrace his honor by contesting his testimony in court.

A few pro-Turkish voices can be distinguished in Arab circles during the Seljuq period, but certainly not very many. One of them was the scholar Ibn Ḥassūl, who served the Seljuq conqueror Tughril Beg as vizier; thus his pro-Turkish feelings are understandable. Ibn Ḥassūl not only eulogizes the proverbial hardihood, the natural gift of leadership, the noble descent, and the political experience of the Turkish nation (*umma*) since the days of the Samanids and Ghaznavids but also praises his Seljuq lord as “savior of the Muslims” (*ghiyāth al-muslimīn*), an epithet most of Ibn Ḥassūl’s anti-Turkish compeers would have hesitated to subscribe to.

### VII

The erosion of the Arab’s exclusive claim to legitimate religious leadership proceeded swiftly in the late Middle Ages. The thirteenth century in particular saw profound changes in Arab-Turkish relations. The Islamic community experienced its darkest hour when, in 1258, the pagan Mongols ravaged Baghdad, the ‘Abbāsid capital, and killed the last caliph, the symbol of Arab and orthodox supremacy. Sunni Islam seemed doomed in those bleak days.

It was Turkish military slaves, the Mamluks, coming from the Eurasian steppes, who were successful in stemming the deadly Mongol danger. Complete political, military, and, last but not least, economic power passed into the hands of this new Turkish ruling caste that regenerated itself anew each generation from the outside. It was seen as a sign of particular divine grace and providence that *Turks* had contained the Mongol avalanche. Turks knew the fighting techniques of their Mongol “cousins” from their common homeland in the steppes of Central Asia. The contemporary Syrian chronicler Abū Shāma rejoiced after the crucial battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt in 658/1260 in saying: “It is verily remarkable that the Tatars were broken and destroyed by their own kinsmen, the Turks.” Paying his respect to the victorious sultan of Egypt, he continues in a couplet:

The Tatars conquered the lands and there came to them
From Egypt a Turk, unmindful of his life.
In Syria he destroyed and scattered them.
To everything there is a bane of its own kind.
And the triumph of the Turks was compounded by the final expulsion of the Crusaders from the Holy Land; one should notice the wording of a panegyric for Sultan al-Ashraf Khalil after he had conquered, in 690/1291, Acre, the last Crusader stronghold:

Praise be to God, the nation of the Cross has fallen;  
Through the Turks the religion of the chosen Arabs has triumphed.\(^{59}\)

The Crusaders had allied themselves to the abominable Mongols, the "vile foe," and had constituted a constant humiliation to Islam for almost 200 years. These exploits immensely enhanced the religious prestige of the Mamluks. The population of Egypt and Syria gratefully acknowledged their achievements. The folk novel of al-Malik al-Zâhir Baybars gives abundant testimony to the general feeling of owing the Mamluks, that is, the Turks, thanks for saving them from an imminent catastrophe.

However, this praise was much more restrained on the part of the ulama. Of course there was, in the Circassian period, Ibn Khaldûn, himself a stranger to the Mashriq, who goes so far as to speak of the "blessing of slavery" when referring to the Mamluks and their legendary victory against the Mongols 150 years earlier. He consistently lauds the merits of these Turkish military slaves who "enter the Muslim religion with the firm resolve of true believers and yet with nomadic virtues,"\(^{70}\) thus joining the stereotype of the noble and independent nomad we heard about earlier in connection with al-Jâhiz to their very concrete accomplishments and sacrifices for Islam. Ibn Khaldûn, much to the dismay of some modern hypernationalistic Arab writers,\(^{71}\) saw Turkish rule as a given and, so to speak, natural stage of development in the history of the Arabs. In his view, the center of gravity had started long ago to move from south to north, toward the territories of the Turks and of the Europeans, the sons of Yâfîth.\(^{72}\)

One more discordant voice praising the Mamluks not only on the battlefield but also as wardens of internal peace and security is the fifteenth-century scholar Abû Ḥâmid al-Qudsî. In one of his books with the telling title Kitâb duwal al-Islâm al-sharî'ha al-bahîyya wa-dhikr mā zahara lî lî min hikam Allâh al-khaftiya fî jâhbab tâ'îjât al-Atrâk ilâ 'l-diyâr al-mišriyya ("... on my idea of God's hidden blessing of having brought the people of the Turks to the lands of Egypt"),\(^{73}\) Abû Ḥâmid al-Qudsî emphasizes the honesty, incorruptibility, and spirit of sacrifice among the Mamluks who effectively and unselfishly protected the peaceful and defenseless Egyptian population from external and internal menace. To him, at least in this treatise, the Turks were the preordained leaders of the Islamic umma. Twelve years earlier, the same Abû Ḥâmid had still held much more conventional views. At that time the ulama, not the umara, were deemed the "salt of Egypt." His fellow scholars had treated him in the intermittent period so abominably that he went, out of sheer hatred for his torturers and certainly not out of conviction, over to the other side.\(^{74}\)

Ibn Khaldûn, an outside observer of Egyptian society, thus appears as the only true minority voice in his positive judgment of the Mamluks. The ulama in general had great difficulty in accepting the intrinsically Turkish triumph in the showdown with the enemies of Islam. The defense of Muslim belief—and that meant also the Muslims’ proper culture and way of life—had passed into alien
hands. And not just any alien hands, but the hands of those despised slave officers who had spent their youth somewhere in some forsaken heathen territory, who could not speak the language of the country and of the Qur’an properly, and who—unlike the Seljuqs—did not bother to establish closer contacts with the local Arab scholarly elite. These uncivilized tyrants even practiced, for inner-Mamluk litigation, a special Turkish jurisdiction, although according to doctrine there could not exist any law beyond and beside the Shari’ā which God had instituted for all believers and which was so wisely entrusted to exclusive ulama care.

The ulama faced a painful conflict between, on the one hand, the religious esteem they owed to the Mamluks as valiant mujahidun and, on the other, the rejection of the same Mamluks as haughty foreign usurpers; there was also the precarious middle way of an anti-Turkish attitude somehow expressed subtly enough not to provoke reprisals from the Mamluk authorities. The ulama now vehemently propagated the traditional stereotype of the Turkish barbarian and even exacerbated it, saying that the Turks were not only without culture but by their very nature were excluded from it.

Al-Sakhāwi, for instance, belittled the achievement of his colleague and teacher Ibn Taghribirdi, who was the son of one of the highest Mamluk emirs of the time, when he asked disparagingly: “[W]hat else can be expected of a Turk?” In perusing the biographical dictionaries of the eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth centuries, one encounters over and over again characterizations of Mamluks in the following vein: He was a villain, brutal, bloodthirsty, and cunning, but—what a surprise!—he was also well versed in Arabic belles lettres and other arts. The impressive literary and scholarly production of the Mamluks, written mainly in Turkish but also in Arabic and Persian, was passed over by local Arab chroniclers. My impression is that this fascinating aspect of the Mamluk achievement did not correspond to the chroniclers’ preconceived ideas and stereotypes of the uncouth Turk. Mamluk “culture” was rather supposed to consist of magic, superstition, and other vestiges of their shamanistic heritage. "As if the Arabs were less susceptible to such superstitious ideas (khurāfāt) than the Turks,” one historian, who was—or at least claimed to be—himself of Mamluk descent, bitterly remarked. Many of these sons and grandsons of Mamluks who were “constitutionally” barred from the lucrative posts of their fathers sought their fortunes in the realm of scholarship. Yet success was not made easy for them. A Turkish background was, to say the least, not conducive to gaining laurels in academe. In the time of Sultan Barqūq, as we learn from his endowment deed, not only Mamluks but all those who were closely associated with them were rigorously denied the right of joining the faculty of the royal madrasa. However this particular injunction must be understood, one thing is clear: For the ulama the maintenance of this final barrier (i.e., keeping the Mamluks out of academic and legal institutions) had become an issue of survival, after the Mamluks had arrogated for themselves so many other responsibilities that had formerly been their own.

The people in the street did not share this feeling of suffocation and threat and showed a greater degree of fairness toward the Turks. Accusing the ulama of selfishness and dishonesty, they pronounced “rather the injustice (or tyranny) of
the Turks than the righteousness (or self-righteousness) of the Arabs” (zulm al-turk wa-lā ʿadl al-ʿarab). The awesome Turk could offer the Egyptians more protection and justice than could the conceited but also feeble fuqahā’ and qadis of their own country.

VIII

This dual attitude toward the Turks also prevailed during the Ottoman period, varying considerably in the different social strata—little as we know about this crucial period in which the first foundations of modern statehood and of Arab national awareness were to be laid. Owing to a particularly unsatisfactory state of research, making precarious statements on a collective mentalité even more precarious, my remarks will remain tentative for much of the following section and, furthermore, will be limited to Egypt, the country on which at least some information has been made accessible, thanks largely to the research of Gabriel Baer and André Raymond.

At the beginning of Ottoman sway, the broad populace of Egypt seems to have accepted the new regime with composure. The craftsmen and fellahin were relieved to know that a Turkish militiaman was on guard in their vicinity, because his presence meant security from marauding gangs and impudent bedouins. More than ever, Turkish was felt to be the language of authority and security. The Mamluk Turks, especially their last brave ruler Tūmān Bāy, were remembered with fond nostalgia—an attitude persisting into our own day. With Tūmān Bāy, Egyptian independence had ended. Yet it was also in these popular quarters, especially in the crafts and guilds, that people began to display, from the late sixteenth century on, an accentuated anti-Turkish bias. In those 2½ centuries, the irrational wholesale denigration of the Turks began, whether they were members of the Ottoman élite, simple Anatolian or Rumelian soldiers, or neo-Mamluks from the Caucasus or the Balkans. One could hear the rhyme: al-atrāk ḥayawān min ghayr īdrāk, “Turks are beasts without brains.” In a final negative crescendo, the Turks were now, so it seems, progressively credited with various repellent abnormal and immoral characteristics. The savage and unruly yet at the same time honest Turk of the early days was now endowed with brutality and lechery—attributions whose negative effects can be felt even today. Even in the Maghrib of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one continued to hear of the “terrible Turk.” The Janissary (inkshari) became the epitome of stupidity in the Levant. Expressions like rās turkī or ʿaʃl turkī ḥagārī—leaving aside even more drastic examples—were, and are still, commonly used in Egypt to denote both stubbornness and dullness.

In the eighteenth century, a certain osmosis between the Turkish military élites and the wealthy Cairo merchants as well as between the lowly Turkish militiamen (quite tellingly called miṣirliyya, “Egyptians”) and the local artisans and craftsmen began, reducing ethnic difference to a secondary criterion of social stratification. This gradual immersion of the Turkish element within Egyptian society may have reduced the pressure in the bilateral relationship, but it may also well have had quite adverse effects on mutual perceptions. With the
breakdown of the once clearly delineated vertical social “apartheid” between Turks and Egyptians, the Turkish foreigner now became a competitor for wealth and influence on one’s own ground and within one’s own class. The old negative cliché was now revitalized, fed by the immediate threat exercised by the new, alien neighbor. The more intimately in-group and out-group are intertwined in a social microcosm, the more violently conflicting interests are represented in the collective mind.

How did the ulama react to the passing of rule from the Mamluk sultans to the Ottomans after 1517? As paragons of Arab Sunni culture, they had special difficulties in accommodating themselves to the new sovereigns. From the very little we know about this subject at the present time, it appears that they established subtle and reserved though positive bonds of loyalty to the Ottoman sultan. He was to them the supreme ghazi, the guarantor of Muslim sovereignty. However, this fealty did not encompass the whole new ruling system. The ulama must have felt more and more pushed aside toward the margins of society. The process we have observed developing in regard to the ulama in the last two sections now reached its climax: the Turks took the last remaining strongholds into their own hands.

Whereas the dawla turkiyya of the Mamluks had been an Egyptian and Syrian—in modern nationalist terms, an Arab—state with an alien ruling class, now power had been transferred to distant sultans in a distant land. Egypt and Syria had become peripheral provinces in a vast empire whose center was on the Bosphorus and no longer on the Nile. The removal of prominent Egyptian artisans, many scholars, huge treasures of Arabic manuscripts, and, most important of all, the Abbasid shadow caliph from Cairo to the Ottoman capital was much more than a chain of symbolic acts. As early as 1521–1522 a Turkish (i.e., Hanafi) qadi replaced the local Egyptian Shafi’i qadi al-qudat as chief judge of the country. The Arab ulama, whose ranks were depleted after 1517, when the Mamluk state was annexed by the Ottomans, had now definitively lost out to the Turks. The last barrier protecting their—as they were likely to see it—monopoly on culture, that is, both religion and scholarship, had been swept away. The triumph of the Turks seemed complete. Now the long-cherished and elaborate idée fixe of the inferiority or even nonexistence of a Turkish Muslim culture had finally been unmasked as a self-deception. It must have been painful for those who still dreamed of the days when Egypt and Syria had been flourishing strongholds of Arab Islam to compare the contributions of Egypt and those of the heartlands of the Ottoman Empire to Arab literature and to orthodox Islam in this period. On the one hand, here were half-literate soldiers writing their campaign diaries, rustic poets without refinement and originality, introverted Sufi sheikhs and scholars whose modest efforts shunned the “hard sciences” such as mathematics completely and remained without an echo beyond their most immediate surroundings. On the other hand, here was the last efflorescence of the Arab sciences, including the study of Arabic grammar, unfolding in Constantinople under the auspices of the Ottoman sovereign, a renaissance in which Turkish scholars played a pivotal role. When Muhammad Anis, a leading Egyptian historian, maintained in the 1950s that the Ottomans
had not possessed any cultural capital to invest in the intellectual life of Egypt between 1517 and 1800, he gravely distorted reality. We must, however, acknowledge that he wrote under the powerful impact of twentieth-century Arab nationalist ideology and was bound to regard Ottoman rule as an alien, foreign—Turkish—imperial domination; thus he was no longer able to appreciate the supranational function of the sultanate for Sunni Muslims (whatever language they spoke and to whatever race they belonged). He was nevertheless in error.

IX

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterized, in the context of this paper, by the gradual and painful growth of this new perspective, establishing new and destroying old bonds and pitting the new idea of an Arab political nationality against the Ottoman Empire, which was no longer respected as the legitimate Islamic polity per se but was suddenly seen as a dominating alien power. From this perspective one will understand that to the Sudanese before 1871, even Egypt appeared as a dawla turkiyya. It was many years—in fact, until the end of World War I (and there were many reversals in this development—one may mention Mustafa Kâmil’s staunch pro-Ottoman, Egyptian nationalism and general Arab support of Turkish, even Young Turk, policies in the non-Arab provinces of the Empire) before these new loyalties (and the ensuing new enmities) were finally firmly rooted and generally accepted.

With the importation of this Western idea of secular nationalism (with its two constituents of the sovereign people and the unifying national language) to the Ottoman Empire and its Arab provinces, the hitherto subdued resentment against Turkish soldiers and officials eventually found a quasi-objective rationale. There appears a clear connection between long-standing ethnic animosities and the full efflorescence of nationalism. Latent anti-Turkish feelings now forced their way to the fore. They could be presented as falling in line with the aims of Arab nationalism. Arab Christians, the spokesmen of this nascent Arab nationalist movement, hoped that cutting ties with the Ottoman sovereign would entail the liberation not only from Turkish yoke but also, and foremost, from the fetters of the Islamic social order in which they did not and could not enjoy equal rights with Muslims.

The Muslim Arab nationalists, however, were precipitated into a severe conflict of loyalties, especially after 1916, when Sharif Husayn of Mecca rose against the Ottomans, calling for the establishment of an Arab national state under his leadership. Both sides, Arabs loyal to the Porte and those supporting the so-called Arab Revolt, took resort to Islamic arguments in order to attack their opponents. The pro-Husayn press, for example, vilified the Committee of Union and Progress for its blatant Turkish, even Türalian chauvinism which included—and this argument is not unfamiliar to us—the sinister intent of Turkifying the Qur’an, God’s gift, given to the Arab nation in their own language. What counted more heavily for a Muslim Arab: fealty to the sultan, the recognized leader of the umma, and to the polity he represented, or patriotic
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Arab sentiment? Fortunately, so one may daresay, the fait accompli of the treaty of Sèvres—that is, the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire—as well as the abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate by Kemal Atatürk and the establishment of half-sovereign Arab states superseded such vexing deliberations. After 1919 the traditional, negative image of the Turk was incorporated into the new, secularist view that Arabs held of their own national history. The dream of golden Baghdad and Cordoba was contrasted with the nightmare of alien, uncivilized Turkish rule through the centuries. The Turk was pictured—perhaps bound to be pictured?—as the undertaker of Arab grandeur. Turkish despotism could now be declared the main if not the sole cause for the depressing age of decadence, inňitâň, in which the great achievements of Arab medieval civilization had been mischievously squandered. We are confronted here with the universal tendency to return compulsively to accomplishments long gone by and of soothing the sores of the present with memories of a brilliant past. In the search for an authentic cultural “personality” (shakkîyya) of their own, some authors, such as the Egyptian cultural geographer Gamal Hamdan, go so far as to declare the “Turk” void of a history, a culture, and even a tangible identity; thus a favorable contrast supporting their own mutilated dignity is created. The Turkish slave who, in his lust for power, takes recourse to dastardly murder appears as a motif not only in modern Arab lyrics but also, in similar forms, in the apologetic political rhetoric of Arab leaders from Nasser to Saddam Hussein. The centuries of Ottoman rule and the considerable progress they brought to the Arab world under the aegis of Islam were found incompatible with the ideology of Arab nationalism and therefore passed over. In the lavish coin cabinets of the Gulf countries, Arab history is consistently presented, from the past to the present, with the notable exception of the 300 years of foreign Ottoman domination. Even in states like Egypt and Lebanon, with their venerable tradition of modern scholarship, it was only in the most recent past that Ottoman and Turkish were introduced into the academic curricula, although these were the languages in which, for some three centuries, these countries had been governed.

To sum up and synthesize: Why did the basically natural and inoffensive image of the Turkish ‘îlj, “barbarian,” ruling over Arab lands, steadily and gradually deteriorate, so that the term became an insult that provokes consternation among Turks and non-Turks even today? What were the factors—besides the quite natural resentment against foreign domination—that made the Turkish “yoke” so particularly intolerable to its Arab subjects? Why was the Turk’s image, characterized by contempt and even hatred, so distorted that it remained an extremely negative one at least until the most recent past? The answer must—so is my conviction—be sought in specifically Islamic aspects of Turkish-Arab coexistence.

Let us go briefly back to the ninth century. In this period the Arabs, both the educated and the uneducated circles, generated, under the impact of the seizure
of military power by the Turks, the very unspecific stereotype of the Turkish "barbarian," a stereotype we are familiar with from so many other cultures. The rapid acculturation of the nomadic Turks, who forced their way into the new Islamic civilization and were all too prone to betray their own cultural background, served to strengthen the Arab feelings of superiority. The Tulunid intermezzo in early medieval Egyptian history provides ample documentation for this subject of the rejection of a Turkish past and a Turkish identity by Turkish rulers who wielded power over Arab subjects. God had, after all, through the Qur'an and the Prophet, specially favored the Arabs.

Then gradually the distribution of weights changed. From dynasty to dynasty the arbitrary powers and the inapproachability of the Turkish rulers grew. Turkish sway became normalcy. To give an example: From Ibn Ṭūlūn to the 1952 revolution, only Turkish dynasts (or such as were assimilated to Turkdom) ruled over Egypt—with the sole exception of the Fatimid caliphs. This growing political and economic dependency had, however, apparently less destructive effects on the ethnic self-confidence of the Arabs than did the menace to their cultural and religious preeminence and ascendancy posed by the Turkish barbarians. This threat was epitomized in the waning of the caliphate, the supreme institution of religious guidance and responsibility that had been reserved to their proper people. After the usurpation of 'Abbasid sovereignty by the Seljuqs and a last, short-lived blossoming of the classical caliphate on a very limited regional scale around 1200, Baghdad perished in the Mongol inferno. In order to give their usurpatory regime a formal legitimation, the Mamluks, who had vanquished the Mongols, installed an 'Abbasid scion who had escaped the Mongol massacre as a puppet caliph. His main privilege was paying homage to the sultan and joining the four chief justices of Cairo on certain ceremonial occasions. In 1517 Sultan Selim deported the last of these miserable 'Abbasid shadow caliphs to Istanbul, from whence he cannot be traced further.

Long before, Turkish sultans had also shouldered the duties of the caliph with admirable efficiency. With high sacrifices of their own blood, they again and again saved political Islam from demise. Turkish presence meant victory and absence defeat. Thus the Turks acquired high merits which the Arab ulama, the guardians of the Shari'a, were called upon to honor and praise. This constellation, however, deprived them of the possibility of attacking openly and legitimately the hated and disdained foreign despots with the legal means they had at their disposal. The result was the helpless suppression of this hatred against the successful Turks and its transformation into bilious, for the most part clandestine, and eventually desperate mockery. The component of uncouthness (i.e., a lack of morals and culture) that was available in the universal cliché of the barbarian, together with many positive and attractive features, was singled out. With apologetic consistency that one element was stressed all the more as the cultural lead of the Arabs in comparison with the Turks became smaller, until finally, in the Ottoman period, the Arabs found themselves behind the Turks even in this regard.

While Persian political theorists were ready as far back as in the sixteenth century to accept a non-Arab and certainly also a Turk as imam as long as no
appropriate candidate from among the sons of Ismāʾīl could be found, Arab jurists by and large worked hard to eschew this conclusion until our century. Although this issue is indeed very complicated and must by no means be reduced to one simplistic thesis, still one should mention in this context that even the Islamic reformer Rashid Riḍā staunchly regarded the Ottoman caliphate as a makeshift solution, since the holder of office was not from among the Quraysh and had not mastered Arabic. He therefore used arguments which, in inner-circle discussions among Muslims on the bounds and requirements of the institution of khilāfa had, even since the Seljuq period one millennium before, lost their stringency. Arabs defended their claims to spiritual guidance in the umma defiantly, often blurring national and religious loyalties, after the bacillus of modern European nationalism had started to affect their minds.

Only the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the annihilation of the legal and constitutional ties between the two peoples created the conditions for the overdue revision of their mutual relationship. The past fifty years have demonstrated how difficult and cumbersome this new beginning was. At first the gap between Turks and Arabs, behind the banners of their proper nationalisms, actually widened. This was the only way for the Turks, who resented Arab "treason" during World War I, to digest the amputation of the Arab provinces that had formed more than half the Ottoman territory. And only on such separate ways could the Arabs learn to forget the century-long Turkish domination.

In recent years the two peoples have begun to rediscover not only their common interests but also their common past. Turkish authors deal, in the Arabic language, with the representation of their people, the Turks, in the works of al-Jāḥiz. Turcological chefs d’oeuvre of Western Orientalism are translated into Arabic. Arab scholars, especially in the Maghreb but also in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, study their respective local history in the early modern period through Ottoman archival materials and have become staunch supporters of close Arab-Turkish ties, especially in the fields of culture and scientific research. In newly founded conferences on Arab-Turkish relations, the unifying, not the separating, elements in this bilateral relationship are invoked. And, as it turns out, it can be helpful to have new and common enemies. The second conference on Arab-Turkish relations, for example, had the rather telling name Symposium on the Decolonization of (lit.: "removal of colonial sediments from") Arab-Turkish Relations. Common appeals are issued to strengthen Islamic fraternity and the alliance against old and new colonialists. These first steps are cautious and often fragile, but full of optimism. One is reminded of similar changes among former arch enemies in Central Europe after World War II.

I think the assumption is justified that without the systematic and well-coordinated study and reenactment of the Arab-Turkish relationship over time, this new solidarity will hardly flourish. This will mean that critical issues such as Turkish policies toward Israel, the problem of the Sanjaq Alexandrette, or—on a quite different level—Turkish claims for all those thousands of Arabic manuscripts that were carried away from Cairo in 1517 as an essentially Turkish national heritage cannot be excluded from this process. And one particularly
sensitive theme that is both a well-suppressed product and, at the same time, a faithful mirror of these difficult bilateral relations is certainly the derogatory imagery that has been discussed in this article and is current even today. It will disappear, if only gradually, not least through the study of the historical framework in which it grew and proliferated. Reality must be confronted. Certainly today, the Arabs no longer have any reason whatsoever to feel inferior to the Turks. Political independence and the wealth hidden in Arab soil have created the necessary distance for perceiving the virtues and values that both peoples have in common and have shared in the past.

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NOTES


3. *Al-tadlīl al-ishṭirākī* (Beirut, 1965), pp. 73–74. The author stresses the responsibility of Turks and Kurds—not Egyptians—for the defense of Egypt in Ayyubid and Mamluk times.


5. Bernard Lewis has commented upon this phenomenon in his *History: Remembered, Recorded, Invented* (Princeton, N.J., 1975), p. 81, where other contemporary witnesses also are given.

6. See the reference in n. 2. Anyone interested in further details on the image of the Turk in medieval Arabic writing, both scholarly and popular, will profit from Arsel’s vast compilation. One may also want to consult Ramazan Şeşen’s findings about the Turks as viewed by the ancient Arabs. See his “Eski Araplar’a göre Türkler,” *Türkiye Mecmuası*, 15 (1968), 11–36. Şeşen is more detached from his subject than Arsel, yet he limits himself to the classical/early medieval period.


8. Allport, in his research on stereotypes, has quite significantly chosen the gradual effacement of the image of the brutal Turk in the United States between 1932 and 1950 as an example for such a process. See his *The Nature of Prejudice*, p. 203.

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11 The statements describing this continuity have not yet been systematically collected; for the time being, see the summary remarks by Helmut Töllner, Die türkischen Garden am Kalifenhof von Samarra. Ihre Entstehung und Machtergreifung bis zum Kalifat al-Mu'tadids, Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte des Orients, no. 21 (Walldorf, 1971), p. 7; one explicit connection, however, is given by Ibn al-Dawâdârî, Kanz al-durar wa-jâmi' al-ghurar, vol. 8, ed. U. Haarmann (Cairo, 1971), p. 212, ll. 4–6.


13 In the Mamluk period we have the opposition: Turks (white, military slaves; Mamluks) and black slaves.


16 Muṣṭafâ Âlî's Description of Cairo of 1599, ed., trans., and annotator Andreas Tietze, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, vol. 120 (Vienna, 1975), p. 63/p. 146, l. 31. Muṣṭafâ Âlî passes a harsh judgment on Gûchçûk Sinân Beg: ʾâqî́â bö̇yî ejebî bir Türk, "indeed, such a foreigner, a Turk."

17 This lack of differentiation continues today. In the Egyptian Arabic vernacular there is no clear distinction between Mamluks and Turks, cf. Erich Prokosch, Osmanisches Wortgut im Ägyptisch-Arabischen, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 78 (Berlin, 1983), p. 31, n. 11.


20 On umma as ethnos in its Qurʾānic usage see now Nâṣif Nasîr, Maḥfūm al-uma bagn al-dîn wa-ʾl-taʿrikh (Beirut, 1978), pp. 11–30.

21 Kitâb al-imta', p. 73.

22 Ibid., p. 74. Abû Ḥayyân apparently did not recognize the psychological mechanisms behind the application of such stereotypical characteristics when he says that, indeed, there are cases of individuals devoid of them (thamma fî jumlatihâ man huwa ʾārin min jamîlîhâ), l. 6.


24 Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, Chs. 7 and 12, especially pp. 119 and 189, emphasizes the existence of factual differences in national characters and cautions against the careless mingling of
factual and fanciful national differences. See also Otto Klineberg's highly stimulating essay "The Character of Nations," in his The Human Dimension in International Relations, pp. 132-43.


26This does not mean that such stereotypes could not be altered or even reversed; the Jewish/Israeli example is most telling: the unmilitary Jew has changed into the tough Israeli.

27So to the Romans those people were "barbarians" who, like the Gauls but not the Persians, were devoid of the crucial characteristic of civilization, that is, political organization. Cf. Y. A. Dauge, Le barbare. Recherches sur la conception romaine de la barbarie et de la civilisation (Brussels, 1981), passim.

28Cf. Fażllallah b. Rüzbihān Khunjī, Mīhmān-nāma-ya Būkhārā, ed. Manūchīhr Sutūda (Tehran 1341/1962), passim. See also the German translation of parts of this text by Ursula Ott, Transoxanien und Turkestan zu Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 25 (Freiburg, Germany, 1974). Correspondingly, a people, when presenting itself in an autostereotype, will select from a variety of quite diverse attributes the one dominant attribute in which it believes itself to contrast favorably with the chosen object of comparison. American efficiency and industriousness may appear to be such a typical quality in a comparison with Latins, yet not with Japanese or Germans; for the latter one will instead take recourse to the rather different qualities of individuality or openness, respectively.

29On this phrase, still alive today and even globally extended, see the still useful study by Ernst Dümmler, Über den Furor Teutonicus (Berlin, 1897).

30On prejudice as the alibi of a weak ego, see Ostermann and Nicklas, Vorurteile und Feindbilder, pp. 19-22.


32It would certainly be rewarding to compare the Arab image of the Turk through the centuries with other collective, reductionist views of "the" Turk, both in the Middle Ages and today, both among those peoples immediately concerned (the non-Muslim and Muslim peoples of the Caucasus and the Balkans, the Germans, Hungarians, Russians) and those at a greater distance; as far as the German image of the Turk (excluding the most recent past) is concerned, one can refer to Şenol Özyurt, Die Türklenieder und das Türkenbild in der deutschen Volksüberlieferung vom 16.-20. Jahrhundert (Munich, 1972). Further research on the relationship between Turks and Persians (as well as Persians and Arabs, to complete the ethnic picture in the central Islamic lands) on this ideological plane is particularly urgent. One may, however, also look for the projections the Arabs made themselves of other peoples with whom they came into close contact. There are, for example, unmistakable typological similarities between the Arab image of "the" Turk and "the" refractory—both dissenting and belligerent—Berber. On the latter stereotype, see the study by H. T. Norris, The Berber in Arabic Literature (London and New York, 1982), p. xi.

33An illuminating example of this feeling of fright is the dream of the contemporary mystic al-Ḥākim al-Tirmidhi (died between 295/907 and 310/922): Turks, assembled around their sultan, threaten to devastate the hero's land—an allusion to the ever-menacing day of judgment. See Bernd Radtke, Al-Ḥākim at-Tirmidi. Ein islamischer Theosoph des 3./4. Jahrhunderts, Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, vol. 58 (Freiburg, Germany, 1980), p. 10. On early Arab renderings of the Turkish barbarian, see also Arsel, Arap, pp. 61-63.
I. Introduction

1. The Concept of "Turk" in the Classical Arabic Literature

2. The Development of the Idea of the Turk

3. The Turk in the Works of Islamic Authors

4. The Turk in the Context of Islamic History

II. The Turk in the Visual Arts

5. The Turk in the Visual Arts of the Timurid Empire

6. The Turk in the Visual Arts of the Ottoman Empire

III. The Turk in the Political and Social Context

7. The Turk in the Political and Social Context of the Timurid Empire

8. The Turk in the Political and Social Context of the Ottoman Empire

IV. The Turk in the Religious Context

9. The Turk in the Religious Context of the Timurid Empire

10. The Turk in the Religious Context of the Ottoman Empire

V. Conclusion

References

See also al-Tha`alibi, *Yatimatu al-dahr* (Beirut, 1399/1979), II, 348, ll. 4–6; Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle, Germany, 1889–90), I, 152, also quotes this poem.

See also Muraj al-dhahab, ed. Ch. Pellat (Beirut, 1974), V, 89, l. 16, #3099.

See also Zekerya Kitapçi, *al-Turk* *m*ta`allafet wa-makmaiwtuhum *fi* 7-terikh al-islâmT hand awasit al-qarn al-theilith al-hijrT.

Leaves this contradiction between *Cf. also Kitam,* one's birthplace—as a natural trait of man that is all the more acutely experienced and necessary the al-Mas`ddi, *Al-tanbih wa-al-ishraf* (Cairo, 1384/1964), I, 59, l. 8. See also Enderwitz, *Gesellschaftlicher Rang,* pp. 212. See also Risâla, p. 49, ll. 5–6: wa-l-turkî al-wâhid umma `alâ `ida (cf. Kitapçi, *al-Turk,* p. 235, #13, and Enderwitz, *Gesellschaftlicher Rang,* p. 122).


Can the text of al-Jâhiž in *Risâla,* p. 76, ll. 1–4, also be interpreted as referring to the Turks who took the land by force?"?


A critical edition is still lacking. For the time being, see F. Krenkow, “The Book of Strife,” *Islamic Culture,* 3 (1929), 561–68, especially 565, #14 and 566, #55.


See the quotation in Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam,* p. vii.
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58 See Ibn al-Faqih, Mukhtasar, p. 197, l. 5, quoted by Goldziher, Muhammedanische Studien, I, 144. Ibn Hassul, who extols the Turks (in Arabic), tries to minimize this genealogical nobility of the Iranians and makes a point of the fact that the Prophet Muhammad was the offspring of two "sacrifices" (dhabithayn), i.e., Ismai'il and his father 'Abdallah b. 'Abd al-Muttalib; cf. Ta'fis, p. 34, ll. 15–19.

59 In his preface to the Diwan-i lughat-i Turk, Mahmod al-Kashghari calls for an equal treatment of his language together with Arabic and Persian, and also presents a Turkish genealogy consistent with the qisas al-anbiyayn: their eponym Turk appears as son of Ya'qish, son of Noah; cf. Robert Dankoff, "Kashghari on the Tribal and Kingship Organization of the Turks," in Archivum Ottomanicum, 4 (1972), 29–30.


62 Ta'fis, p. 40, ll. 4–6.
63 Ibid., p. 42, ll. 1–3.
64 Ibid., p. 38.
65 Ibid., p. 39, l. 15.
66 Ibid., p. 43, l. 11.
67 Ibid., p. 43, l. 18.


71 Cf. the discussion of this issue by Bernard Lewis, History: Remembered, Recorded, Invented, p. 79.


77 Compare a similar discourse between the Turkish Qizilbâsh and the Iranian educated class in Roger Savory, "The Qizilbash, Education, and the Arts," Turcica, 6 (1975), 168–76.

Ibn al-Dawāddāri, Durar al-trjän wa-ghurar al-azmān, ms. Istanbul, library of Al Damad Ibrahim Paša, no. 913, year 615, fol. 3.


This period is not dealt with in the study of Ilhan Arsel.

As mentioned above, it was in the crafts and guilds of premodern Egypt, to which Professor Baer devoted a major part of his scholarship, that anti-Turkish sentiment seems to have been particularly acute. A largely untapped source on ideological issues connected with the Ottoman presence in Egypt is Evliyā Chelebi’s travelogue (vol. X of the Seyḥatnāme) from the late seventeenth century.

See his encyclopaedia of Cairo economic and social life from 1650 to 1798: Artisans et commerçants au Caire au 18ème siècle, 2 vols. (Damascus, 1973–74).

See the report by the Franciscan André Thevet who visited Egypt in the middle of the sixteenth century and described the high esteem in which this tragic figure was held by the population of Cairo; cf. Jean Chesneau and André Thevet, Voyages en Égypte des années 1549–1552, Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale (Cairo, 1984), p. 177. In this travelogue the advance of Turkish (at the expense of Arabic), at least in Cairo after the Ottoman conquest, is also given explicit attention.

See, among others, Ḥusayn Fawzī, Sindibād māṣrī, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1969), pp. 18, 28–29, and 74.

See the anonymous Kitāb al-dakhkhā’ir wa-‘l-tuhafā fi bīr al-ṣanā‘ī‘ wa-‘l-ḥiraf, Gotha Research Library, Arabic ms. no. 903, fol. 110b. I owe this reference to the late Gabriel Baer, Hebrew University/Jerusalem. See his “Egyptian Attitudes towards Turks and Ottomans in the seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” Prilozi (Sarajevo), 30 (1980), 25–34. André Raymond, in his Artisans et commerçants au 18ème siècle (Damascus, 1974), II, 543, also mentions the anti-Turkish bias expressed in the Kitāb al-dakhkhā’ir.


Erich Prokosch, Osmanisches Wortgut im Ägyptisch-Arabischen, p. 6, quoting from Aḥmad Amīn’s Qāmiş al-‘aḏāt (p. 22, s.v. “Aṭrāk”).

Götz Schregle, Arabisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch, I, 343b, s.v. “ḥ-j-r.”

In this context, the proverb shakhkhā’īn ḵaḍar ‘alā ḵara‘ ḵal: marḥābā qaradāsh, recorded in the 1870s. See F. L. Burekhardt, Arabic Proverbs; Or the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians Illustrated from their Proverbial Sayings Current at Cairo (London, 1875), p. 113, no. 363.

Raymond, Artisans, II, 725–26 and 727–37, especially 729.


On the contacts between Arab and Ottoman ulama in the sixteenth century which were not devoid of mutual respect we have now, in a first overview of a complex field, Michael Winter’s important study, Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt (New Brunswick, N.J., 1982); the key figure in his book is Sheikh al-Shaʾrānī (d. 1565/66).


This is one result of research done by Professor William Cleveland on the Arab press—both in the Hijāz (al-Qiblā) and in Turkey (al-Sharq, al-ʿAšāl al-islāmī)—during the years 1916 to 1918; he read a paper on this subject on January 23, 1986, at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill
University, Montreal. Another field of Arab–Turkish interaction in the period preceding World War I—out of numerous areas that have hardly been touched—is the status of authors of Turk-Circassian descent writing in Arabic. Shawqi, for example, was bitterly reproached for aristocratic collusion with the Turkish regime ruling Egypt. Al-‘Aqqād attacked him for “treating the Egyptian patriots exactly as the ‘Egyptianized Turks’ (al-ātrak al-mutamaṣṣira) did.” Ḥāfiz ʿIbrāhīm, another poetic luminary, was at least labeled a “democratic Turk.” Cf. Turki Muğheid, Sultan Abdulhamid II. im Spiegel der arabischen Dichtung. Eine Studie zu Literatur und Politik in der Spätperiode des Osmanischen Reichs (Berlin, 1987), pp. 309–10.

See also Bernard Lewis, History: Remembered, Recorded, Invented, p. 75.

Ibid., pp. 78–82.


See, e.g., the poetry by Ṣalāḥ Chāḥīn or—a kind reference by Dr. Asʿad Khairallah, Freiburg—the poem Shajarat al-durr by the late Khalīl Ḥāwī.

Cf. the remarks by Arsel, Arap, pp. 196–98 and 207–11, on Gamal Abdel Nasser’s anti-Turkish speeches; “Tyranny, oppression and ruin characterized their rule in Egypt, which continued for many dark centuries,” he qualified Mamluk power; cf. this quote in Andrew Ehrenkreutz, Saladin (Albany, N.Y., 1972), p. 233. And key rationales in the Iraq war against Iran are nationalistic: warding off enemies of the Arab nation encompasses the Turks in the past and the Persians in the present.

Kind information given by a participant in the discussion following the presentation of an early version of this paper at the University of Frankfurt on May 23, 1985, at the invitation of Professor Barbara Kellner-Heinkele.


Alexandria would not have fallen into the hands of the Franks (king Peter of Cyprus) in 1365 if the city had not been “empty of brave fighters, Turks and Turcomans”; cf. al-Nuwayrī al-Iskandarānī, Kitāb al-ilmūm, ed. A. Atiya (Hyderabad, 1393/1973), V, 184.


Cf. the work quoted above in n. 40.

E.g., Wilhelm Barthold’s Zwölf Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Türken Mittelasiens, trans. ʿAmād al-Saʿīd Sulaymān and ʿIbrāhīm ʿṢabrī under the title Tāʾrīkh al-Turk fi ʿĀṣya al-wustā (Cairo, n.d. [approximately 1960]), or his Turkest Down to the Mongol Invasion, trans. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ʿUthmnān Ḥāshim as Turkistan min al-fāṭḥ al-ʿarabī ilā ʿl-ḥazw al-mughālī (Kuwait, 1401/1981).


On this issue we have an unpublished brief report, read at the International Conference on Options for Turkey’s International Economic and Political Relations, June 28–30, 1979, in Istanbul (cf. the report by Udo Steinbach in Orient, 20 [1979], 14) by the director of the Cairo Center for Strategic and Political Studies, El-Sayed Yassin, together with Wahid A. El-Megid, “The Image of Turkey in the Arab World.” The paper begins with a presentation of al-Kawakibi, Tabāṭīʾ al-istibdād, and its anti-Ottoman stand and ends with an analysis of the burgeoning economic relations between Turkey and certain Arab countries, such as Libya, in the mid-seventies.