

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Reflection of the Turkish Image and Turcophobia in the Turkish Translation of C. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* through Bourdieu's Notion of 'Habitus'^{*}

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Abstract

"The image of the Turk" has been proved to be a quite popular topic utilised in studies of English literature, art, and history. The mutual diplomatic "friendship" initiated by the official agreement between the English and Turks in the 15th century as opposed to the hegemony of the Spanish navy changed its route and turned to be a hostile one as a reaction to the political power of the Ottomans over the Europeans. The concept of "Turk", used in the senses of "barbarian, vulgar, uncivilised, uncultured and gavur", has begun to be employed as a vehicle to show the reaction and enmity against the Ottomans in many literary works. In this respect, Christopher Marlowe, being one of the most eminent representatives of the 16th century English drama, staged his masterpiece *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587) which was translated into Turkish with the title *Büyük Timurlenk*. In this specific work, he represents the "image of the Turk" and reflects "Turcophobia" that is known to be the enmity and fright of Turks as observed in 15th and 16th century Europe. The major distinction and aim of this article is to analyse Marlowe's original work *Tamburlaine the*

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Great and to compare and contrast it with its Turkish translation entitled *Büyük Timurlenk* in the light of socio-cultural and political biases to show the negative attitudes towards the Turks, which would turn into Turcophobia later through Bourdieu's notion of "Habitus".

Keywords

Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Büyük Timurlenk*, Turcophobia, Translation Studies, National prejudice, Bourdieu, Habitus.

Bourdieu'nun 'Habitus' Kavramı Işığında C. Marlowe'un *Büyük Timurlenk* Olarak Çevirilen Eserinde Türk İmgesinin ve Türkofobinin Yansıtımı*

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Öz

“Türk İmgesi”, İngiliz edebiyatı, sanatı ve tarihi çalışmalarında konu edinilen bir unsurdur. XV. yüzyıl sonunda iki ülke arasında İspanya'nın denizlerdeki hâkimiyetine karşı ilk resmî Türk-İngiliz ittifak anlaşmasıyla başlayan dostluk, zamanla farklı boyutlar kazanmış, Avrupa'da Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na karşı sergilenen düşmanca tutum, İngiltere'yi de etkilemiştir. “Barbar, kaba, geri kalmış, kültürsüz, cahil, gâvur” anlamına gelecek şekilde kullanılan “Türk” kavramı, birçok edebî eserde Türk karşıtlığı ve düşmanlığına dönüşmeye başlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, XVI. yüzyılın önemli İngiliz tiyatro oyun yazarlarından Christopher Marlowe, 1597 yılında *Tamburlaine the Great* adı ile kez sahnelenen ve Türkçeye *Büyük Timurlenk* olarak çevrilen başyapıtında, “Türk” kavramını ele almış, özellikle XV. ve XVI. yüzyıl Avrupasında derin Türk düşmanlığı ve korkusu olarak adlandırılan Türkofobi'yi (Türk korkusunu) yansıtmıştır. Bu makalenin konu kapsamındaki diğer çalışmalardan farkı ve amacı, Marlowe'un bu eserinde, döneminin sosyo-kültürel ve ekonomik önyargılarının Bourdieu'nün 'Habitus' kavramı ışığında, Türklere karşı sergilenen olumsuz yaklaşımın nasıl Türkofobi'ye dönüştüğünü, kaynak ve çeviri eser karşılaştırmasıyla ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Büyük Timurlenk*, Türkofobi, Çeviribilim, Ulusal ön yargı, Bourdieu, Habitus.

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Introduction

The issue of “the image of the Turk,” discussed and examined in almost every era due to socio-economic, socio-political, and religious reasons, attracted the attention of Europe with the establishment of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 13th century and its gradual emergence as a significant political power. The image of the Turk frequently appears in the nonfictional writings of travellers who visited Ottoman lands as well as in English literary works, particularly in plays performed in English Renaissance theatres. This image, reflected in both travellers’ writings and literary works, is biased and prejudiced due to the strong political and religious threats posed by the Ottomans to Europe. The representation of Ottoman Turks is seen to change “according to the degree of danger they posed to Christianity and Europe”¹ rather than concrete realities (Şenlen 132). In other words, the Ottomans, and therefore the Turks, are marginalized to elevate European states. In many works written during this period, Turks are described with adjectives like “barbarian, infidel, tyrant,” while the West is stereotyped as “civilized, Christian, and developed.” Cristiano Bedin mentions that from the 15th and 16th centuries onwards, a series of clichés to express “Turkishness” spread in the West (190-191). In this context, as Edward Said points out in his 1978 seminal work *Orientalism*, the concept of Orientalism, including the notion of the “other” in it, is the socio-political and socio-economic practice of establishing Western superiority over the East (Said 128). Thus, “fundamental distinctions were made between the West and the East, and these differences were eventually used as a method to subject the East to the West” (Turanlı 104). According to Şahin Filiz, “Turcophobia does not only deny Turkish identity with the label ‘Turkishness,’ but it also sends a message that it stands against it.”

It is necessary to examine this image of the Turk and the Turcophobia phenomenon through historical works because the roots of such issues are based on historical events. In applying this contextual method, literary works surely play an important role. Hande Seber, for example, examines the image of the Turk and Turcophobia (the fear of Turks) in her article through a source work focusing on a specific geography and author (201-202). Similar to *The Giaour* by Lord Byron in Seber’s analysis, one of the most important of these works is *Tamburlaine the Great (I-II)* (1587) by

the English playwright Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), considered a masterpiece, in which Turks and the image of the Turk are prominently seen and which was translated into Turkish as *Büyük Timurlenk* by Özdemir Nutku in 2018. Therefore, it is argued that this work is significant in examining the perspectives of Europeans towards Turks during a specific historical period. Acknowledging that there are many works written on the image of the Turk in the West (Akşin 23), this article differs from other works written on this subject in its purpose to reveal how the negative attitude towards Turks, illuminated by the socio-cultural and economic prejudices of the period, turned into Turcophobia through the comparison of the original and translated works in Marlowe's masterpiece. Müşerref Yardım refers to a specific form of imagination in her research on Turcophobia and the othering process in the Western imagination, stating that "the way the West deals with Turks takes place around the orientalist discourse" (412). How this orientalist imagination is reflected in the translation is also a matter of scholarly curiosity? In the comparative examination of the abovementioned source and target works, a purposive sampling method is used. The researcher identified the lines in the source text where Turkish-origin characters are mentioned and where the main characters are described in comparison with Turkish characters, and the sections where the image of the Turk is clearly discernible through critical discourse analysis are noted. These sections are reviewed according to the purpose of the study, and all the sections reflecting not only the image of the Turk but also Turcophobia are included as samples.

It is clear that literary works may not be as accurate or reliable as historical sources and monographs/research studies in conveying historical information and phenomena. Many literary works not only contain the imagination of the authors but also reflect the societal phenomena and judgments of the period they were surrounded by to attract the interest of the masses. In line with this, Pierre Bourdieu approaches such literary and artistic productions with his concept of "habitus." In his work *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu first prepares a framework to explain how the unique means of production of cultural environments are used during the acts of production specific to that culture. At the same time, he uses this framework to examine the effects of these productions on specific subjects during and after the acts of production. Bourdieu calls the system that constitutes this framework

“habitus.” According to him, habitus is “a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class” (Bourdieu 86). Therefore, the concept of habitus indicates a collective existence established and repeatedly produced within dominant social and cultural conditions. These “internalized structures” and “schemes of perception” structure the perception of the world and the habitat they assume they continue to exist within for the subjects of that culture (Bourdieu 86). In other words, habitus inculcates a worldview in its subjects by attributing value to certain material or immaterial (cultural) things. Therefore, within habitus, some things are valuable, and others are not. Even at the seemingly private level of the body, habitus imposes certain characteristics and endows some as good, such as physical strength, beauty, and ugliness, while others are stigmatized as bad. Additionally, some characteristics are constructed as neutral and natural, i.e., pre-cultural and objective. Qualities constructed as neutral and natural, often such as race or gender, are the most enduring and difficult to challenge. It would not be wrong to argue that Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is applied in literary works by the authors, consciously or unconsciously, to reflect a particular idea or ideology and that a play which achieves the audience’s favour at a particular time reflects the societal judgments of that period. In this sense, these works are as important in shaping the images in the minds of the people who are the audience or readers of the time as the historical events themselves. While the image is shaped by real events, the influence of literary and artistic works during this formation cannot be denied.

Based on this idea, this article puts emphasis on the evaluation of the dominant image of the Turk in Europe during the period when Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* was written, using specific examples from the work. Using the translation of the source work, explanations are made through Turkish texts, and differences between the source and target texts are highlighted. The focus is not on the translation itself or the reflection of the work in the translation but on the construction of the image of the Turk and the accompanying Turcophobia in the work. It is clearly seen that the “image of Turk [was used] to unite Christian Europeans against a common enemy and to create a common consciousness within Europe” (Akdemir 131). To reinforce this idea, this article first focuses on the image of the Turk that prevailed in Europe during a specific century range. This section

explains, with examples from different works, how the image of the Turk created in the literary works of the period is shaped and what it essentially is. In the second part, Marlowe's work *Tamburlaine the Great* and its Turkish translation *Büyük Timurlenk* are examined comparatively. Under the third section, the concepts of the image of the Turk and the Turcophobia reflected in the aforementioned work are explained, and the evaluation section is initiated. The reflection of Turcophobia in *Tamburlaine the Great* and its Turkish translation *Büyük Timurlenk* is discussed through selected examples. In the conclusion section, the use of the image of the Turk in the work, the shaping of the work with the judgments of the period, its success, and how it supported Turcophobia in a cyclical manner is scrutinized. First, in the following section, it is important to position the work historically and imagistically by looking at the image of the Turk in the geography during the years the author was producing his works.

The Image of Turk in Europe between the 16th and 18th Centuries

In many countries and cities of Europe, one can encounter numerous artistic works, from paintings to sculptures, based on the prevailing image of the Turk in Europe. In the third part of his comprehensive study, Serhat Ulađlı, emphasizing Turcophobia and Islamophobia in particular, discusses the image of the Turk in Western sources in sociological and historical terms (138). Examining these artistic works reveals that the image of the Turk had an influence in Europe, especially between the 16th and 18th centuries. However, it is not easy to clearly answer the question of what exactly the image of the Turk was in European art and literature (and even in many other writings). The mysterious and rich culture of the East influenced the West, but without really knowing the essence of Eastern culture, this metaphorically myopic perspective, with its Orientalist influences, supported a certain image of the Turk in every work written and drawn. This biased Western perspective on the East and Turks, which is still debated today, has a historical background spanning hundreds of years. Only by evaluating this background can the West-East relations be placed on a healthy foundation. Understanding these prejudices and overcoming them is an important field of research. Traces of these negative approaches, which make significant contributions to the formation of today's Western thought, can also be seen in the literature and thought of Western thinkers after the Enlightenment period. In this context,

several specialists like Onur Bilge Kula, Leyla Coşan, Esra Süer, and Zeynep Çelikce have meticulously worked on the image of the Turk, particularly in the context of Europe in general and French, German, and Western-identified literature and philosophy. Among these scholars, to illustrate further, Kula writes quite significant works on topics such as *Batı Felsefesinde Oryantalizm ve Türk İmgesi* [Orientalism and the Image of the Turk in Western Philosophy] (2010), *Alman Kültüründe Türk İmgesi* [The Image of the Turk in German Culture] (1992), *Avrupa(lılık) Nedir?: Türkiye Ne Kadar Avrupalıdır?* [What is Europe(anism)?: How European is Turkey?] (2015), and *Batı Edebiyatında Oryantalizm* [Orientalism in Western Literature] (2011). Taking his cue from Edward Said's inaugural work *Orientalism*, he examines the image of the Turk in the works of Western thinkers like Wilhelm Leibniz, Voltaire, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Thomas Mann. According to Ahmet Gençal, Kula's works, with their historical narrative and socio-historical tracking of the thought process, provide important clues for understanding the historical background of issues that still appear in contemporary research in history, literature, and philosophy, such as “the perception of Turks in Europe, the identification of Islam with terrorism, Turkey-EU relations, Islamophobia, and Turkish-Greek relations” (185).

The way the West approaches and reflects the image of the East and specifically the Turk in its works and history is a comprehensive field of research exemplified and examined with works and creations in philosophy, sociology, and history. However, although the benefits of examining the aforementioned subject on this broad ground are not overlooked within the scope of this article, the focus is on the image of the Turk in English literature between the 16th and 18th centuries. Thus, detailed information about the reality in which the analysed and exemplified work is ‘created’ has been attempted to be provided.

Nazan Aksoy, in her work entitled *Rönesans İngiltere'sinde Türkler* [Turks in Renaissance England], tries to shed light on East-West debates and presents some findings. Although Muslims or “Saracens”² are not always perceived differently from Easterners, she argues that Turkish stereotypes are intensely observed in medieval European literature (11-15). For Aksoy, in medieval romances, Turks are not always depicted as treacherous, untrustworthy, and

cruel people; on the contrary, their honourable, brave, and strong personalities are emphasized. Even when they fight against Christians, they are always portrayed as fighting chivalrously within the rules of chivalry. Aksoy states that the Turkish knight in medieval folk games is an example of this (16-20).

Similar characters and images can also be seen, albeit in small numbers, in the 16th century. For instance, in Edmund Spenser's (1552-1599) epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, published in 1590, no distinction is made between "Saracens" and Turks. The knight Cymochles in Spenser's work is described as an Easterner who indulges in pleasure and worldly delights. On the other hand, he is praised as a hero who manages to make his name known to the world for his bravery. The same knightly type can be seen participating in tournaments with Christians in Thomas Kyd's (1558-1594) play *Soliman and Perseda*, thought to have been staged in 1593 (Şenlen 133-134).

In the late 16th century, however, the attitude of Europeans and the English towards Turks in literary works, art, and history changed in general. The Ottoman Turks, who became a serious threat to the Christian world, began to be depicted with a different image from this period onwards. The historians and travel writers of the period, with their prejudiced perspectives similar to what is described in Bourdieu's habitus concept, started to portray the Turks as "cruel deceitful treacherous evil" people. Another significant reason for such portrayals is historical events. The unending victories of the Turks against the Christians during that period necessitate the need for a biased and partisan explanation of these successes from their perspective to justify and explain these victories. Therefore, during that era, the successes of the Ottomans and Turks began to be narrated from a perspective that Christianity rejected. As a result, what later became known as "Turcophobia," or the fear of Turks, emerged.³

With the spread of bloody murder scenes, one of the significant innovations in the period's theatre, utilizing these scenes to evoke fear and horror in the audience, the image of the "Terrible Turk" and the portrayal of the Turk as a cruel tyrant or an unforgiving "villain" became commonplace. After these representations, the word "Turk" evoked cruelty and mercilessness, and the new image of the Turk in the Renaissance began to resemble Machiavellian ideals. An example of this period, when Saracens and Turks were equated, can be seen in Marlowe's another play *The Jew of Malta* (1590), where

the Muslim slave Ithamore, acting under the orders of his Machiavellian Jewish master Barabas, who operates against his fellow Turks, is depicted as a true “villain.” Another example is Thomas Nashe’s (1567-1601) novel *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), where the seductress Tabitha is described as an infidel and a Turk prone to committing every conceivable sin beneath her perfect meticulousness (Nashe 255). In John Mason’s revenge tragedy, *The Turke* (1610), an obscure writer of the period, a Turk named Mulleasses collaborates with the Machiavellian governor of Florence, Borgias, in his schemes concerning his niece Julia’s marriage (Aksoy 117).

These examples indicate that the 16th century brought a new attitude towards Turks in Europe. However, this attitude is not based on an absolute view. The reflection of the transforming image of the Turk in English literature from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance does not show a rigid and definite characteristic. Therefore, the depiction of Turks and the image of the Turk in the dramatic works of the period can vary. One of the most well-known and striking examples of the reflection of the image of the Turk in English literature is Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great (Part I & II)*.

Marlowe and *Tamburlaine the Great*

Christopher Marlowe, born in 1564, the same year as perhaps the most written about English playwright William Shakespeare, wrote significant and unforgettable works not only for English literature but also for world literature during his short life of 29 years. Despite coming from a poor family, he was diligent and intelligent enough to receive a good education at Cambridge University and, after completing his education, achieved success with his plays on the London stage (Bloom 15).

Known more for his plays due to his powerful characters and strong use of language and images, Marlowe also has poems and translations thanks to his education at Cambridge University (Kuriyama 2-3). The characters he created on a universal scale in his works continue to exist as human types valid in all centuries, and their exaggerated language leaves a mark on the audience/reader. One of Marlowe’s most distinctive features, which may be observed in his play *Tamburlaine the Great*, the subject of this article, is his ability to depict “the outbursts of rage and the showy scenes of violence” of his characters (Cole 13-17).

In the first book of the two-part *Tamburlaine the Great*, which forms the core of this article, Timur⁴ is described as a powerful, brave, and mighty emperor who defeats the Ottomans, Egyptians, and Persians, captures the invincible ruler of the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Bayezid, and his wife, humiliating them by parading them in a cage. The second book describes the wars between the Kingdoms of Hungary and Anatolia and then the death of Timur. In this work, Timur vaguely represented between Islam and paganism is championed over the Islamic ruler Bayezid and is portrayed as a saviour of Europeans from the Turks. Marlowe's manipulation in portraying these historical figures in his play shows, as Ümmügülsüm Albiz would contend (6-7), how he was influenced by the habitus of his time and environment.

The Turkish-English relations that developed within the 16th century can be considered one of the main reasons for Marlowe writing this play. After the Reformation period, Protestant and Catholic countries, having faced each other many times in violent circumstances, sought ways to ally with the Ottoman Empire, which had a significant impact on the politics and geography of Europe. One such country was England, which officially adopted Protestantism during the reign of Henry VIII (1491-1547). Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603), wishing to establish close relations with the Ottomans against Catholic France, succeeded in obtaining permission from the Sultan for the Levant Company to engage in commercial activities in the Eastern Mediterranean in 1580. Since commercial activities also brought cultural interactions, it is observed that there was a keen interest in Turks and their culture during this period (Karaca 12-15). So much so that, according to Nazmi Ağıl, "the number of Westerners who converted to Islam and became Turks increased during these years." Considering Marlowe's interest in historical and political figures that shaped events, it can be said that Timur had a highly impressive character for the playwright. Marlowe sees the story of Timur's transformation from a "Scythian shepherd to the conqueror of the known world" (McInnis 1) as a symbol of Renaissance humanism and intensely works on the theme of an ordinary person reaching significant positions through his intellectual faculties. In the play, his powerful rhetoric and command of speech allow him to subdue his enemies without bloodshed and even persuade them to join his side. Traditionally associated with savagery, however, Timur also retains this association between the Turk and

the barbaric throughout the play: He kills two virgins given as gifts by the governor of Damascus to avoid harming the city, burns many cities to the ground, and kills his own son Calyphas, who avoids fighting, with his own hands, reflecting his inhumane character (Ağıl).

In Marlowe's play, Timur's religious affiliation is deliberately left ambiguous. Although depicted as a Muslim in historical texts and throughout the play, Timur frequently references Greek and Roman gods and Christian concepts. Marlowe, in a manner supporting Islamophobia, shows Timur considering himself superior to the Prophet Muhammad, inflating his arrogance. In fact, when the protagonist conquers Babylon, he collects and burns all the Qur'ans in the city. These attributes combined make Timur a compelling character who, despite his tyranny and arrogance making him detestable, captivates the audience with his deep passion, grand ideals, and eloquence (Ağıl). Within this respect, the character of Timur in the play is formulated according to the habitus, which is "the flexible, variable, and transferable predispositions formed through the nourishment of individual characteristics from the field and environment" (Albiz 3-4).

The Anti-Turkish Narrative and the Reflection of Turcophobia in Marlowe's Work

Marlowe clearly uses *Tamburlaine the Great* to trigger anti-Turkish sentiments and thus popularize his play. He portrays the Turks as a threat to Christian Europe, in line with the perception of his time. Depicting the boastful and malevolent image of the Muslim Turk in this work, Marlowe emphasizes that this group of people has been a threat to the security and peace of Christian lands for centuries. It is a well-known fact that the unending assaults of the Ottoman Empire on the territorial and coastal boundaries of Europe were often successful (Jansen 13), and thus, the perception of the Turks as a threat in Christian Europe was firmly established.

Marlowe was not alone in fashioning such an antagonistic image of the Turk in his works. As stated above, many playwrights of the Elizabethan era dramatized the racial and religious prejudices of the West towards the Ottoman Empire and Turks, using these biases as prototypical concepts of their time. In *Tamburlaine the Great*, Marlowe selectively uses these traditional depictions, particularly highlighting the attributes of

combativeness, violence, and aggression attributed to Turks and Muslims to shape his characters. The author also occasionally touches on religious matters (such as the Turkish understanding of Islam).

Even though Marlowe shapes the characters of Timur and Bayezid based on the translations of the sources available to him at the time, many characters are created out of his imagination. The reason for depicting Timur and the Persians as pagans rather than Muslims, despite knowing Timur to be a Muslim, is likely not due to a lack of access to historical sources, considering Marlowe's access to Cambridge University and the circles of the intelligentsia of his time. Therefore, it is more probably an effort to separate the main character from the negative impressions that the Muslim image might evoke in the audience while reinforcing anti-Turkish and consequently anti-Muslim sentiments. By doing so, the audience could empathize with Timur and despise Bayezid. Hence, it is evident that Marlowe's faithfulness to historical sources is secondary to his creative liberties.

Before moving on to Marlowe's creative liberties, one also needs to state that the play is actually based on a significant historical event. The historical battle between Timur and Sultan Bayezid took place near Ankara in 1402 and ended with Timur's victory. The defeat of the Turks, who had not lost a battle before, highly resonated with the European parties. It inspired many historians and writers, leading to the legendary portrayal of the Tatar ruler in history. That is why one of the most well-known works reflecting this period is Marlowe's play. Marlowe dramatizes this historical event, almost creating an anti-Turkish propaganda piece, depicting it with a boastful tone (Ribner 251-252).

The portrayal of the Turk in Marlowe's work, however, can be distinctly differentiated from the depictions by his contemporaries. For instance, the author uses the character of Sultan Bayezid to reflect the transformation in Timur, who constantly seeks more power and authority. Additionally, the fall of Bayezid, the powerful Ottoman, is used to illustrate the rise of Timur as the absolute ruler of the East. In the play, this powerful Ottoman's fall exemplifies what could happen to someone who has achieved great successes and held high positions. It serves as a didactic warning to tyrants like Timur, who does not learn from the rise and fall of his enemies, highlighting the inevitability of death and the fickle nature of fortune.

A significant portion of the first part of the work details the confrontation, defeat, and humiliation of the unfortunate Sultan by Timur. Marlowe builds his work on the negative feelings and prejudices towards the Turkish Sultan, portraying Timur, who aims to reach the heavens, as ruthless, irreligious, and uncaring for ethical and societal norms, yet due to the audience's hatred and fear of the Turks, Timur is celebrated as the hero in the play.

In *Tamburlaine the Great*, unlike in his other works, Marlowe highlights the protagonist's achievements. Throughout the play, Timur defeats Theridamas, Cosroe, Mycetes, the Sultan of Egypt, and the King of Arabia. However, Marlowe combines the prevalent anti-Turkish views in Renaissance literature with the identity of Sultan Bayezid, focusing on the historical defeat and prolonged humiliation as well as the Ottoman Interregnum (1402-1413), providing the audience with a sense of satisfaction. Relying on the imageries of English literature in which Turks are frequently depicted as demonic, the playwright created a hero, even a theatrical play, using this very Turkish image and the widespread Turcophobia among the masses.

To understand how this concept was created, it is necessary to briefly summarize the work. The play begins in Persepolis, where the Persian Emperor Mycetes wants to get rid of Timur, a shepherd and itinerant bandit. In the same scene, Mycetes' brother Cosroe plots to overthrow Mycetes and take the throne. In the next scene, Timur's homeland is visited, and Timur's capture and conquest of the Egyptian King's daughter, Zenocrate, are narrated. Confronted by Mycetes' soldiers, Timur convinces them and later Cosroe to join him in fighting against Mycetes. Although he promises Cosroe the Persian throne, after Mycetes' defeat, Timur takes the throne for himself. Now in power, Timur targets the Ottoman Emperor, Bayezid. He defeats the Turkish Sultan and his allies, captures the Sultan and his wife Zabina, and humiliates the defeated Sultan by confining him in a cage and feeding him leftovers from his table. Bayezid, upon hearing of another victory by Timur, commits suicide by banging his head against the iron bars. His wife follows suit and commits suicide in the same manner. After conquering Africa and proclaiming himself Emperor of the continent, Timur sets his sights on Damascus. This leads to a confrontation with Zenocrate's father. When Zenocrate pleads for her father's life, Timur grants her request. At the end of the first part, Timur and Zenocrate marry, and she is crowned Empress of Persia.

In the second part, Timur continues to attack neighbouring kingdoms while educating his sons to carry on his legacy as a ruler. When his eldest son Calyphas wishes to stay with his mother and avoid death, Timur becomes furious. Meanwhile, Bayezid's son Callapine escapes from prison, gathers allies, and seeks to avenge his father. The two sides clash, and Timur emerges victorious. Learning that Calyphas remained in the tent during the battle, Timur kills his own son. Later, he forces the defeated kings to draw his chariot. Upon reaching Babylon, which resists him, Timur again shows his cruelty. He has the official who offers the city's wealth to save his life hanged from the wall and shot. He orders the binding and drowning of the city's inhabitants, regardless of age or gender, in the nearby river. He burns the Qur'an and declares himself superior to God. Even as he lies on his deathbed, he defeats an enemy. Timur dies, and his sons continue to conquer the rest of the world. Examining the summarized play reveals the portrayal of anti-Turkish images and the reflection of Turcophobia in many parts of the play, as exemplified below.

Examples of Turcophobia in *Tamburlaine the Great* and *Büyük Timurlenk*

In *Büyük Timurlenk*, numerous examples can be found where Turks are portrayed as dangerous, cruel, and destructive enemies of Europe. The portrayal of Turks as savagely as they are illustrated in this play is rare in Western literature. At the beginning of the play, the Turkish armies marching towards European cities are bloodthirsty for Christian blood. Within the framework of the image of the Turk in the play, Turks are a nation that attacks Christian lands at every opportunity and shows no humanity towards Christians.

In the first scene, Sultan Bayezid boasts about the siege of Constantinople and explicitly states his intention to move towards Europe. Timur, on the other hand, is depicted as a ruler threatening the eastern borders of the empire, preventing Bayezid from focusing on this goal and saving the Europeans from the Turkish assaults. Marlowe crafts this initial scene based on historical facts. "Due to his bravery and boldness at the Battle of Nicopolis," Sultan Bayezid "earned the nickname "Thunderbolt" (İnalçık 232), besieged Constantinople, which was then under the control of the Byzantines, in 1396, but had to lift the siege due to the Crusades initiated by Europe. In 1399, he besieged the city again, and when "the fall of the city

was imminent, the danger of Timur arose in the east” (İnalçık 233). Timur, the founder of the Timurid Empire, who sought to establish dominance in Eastern Anatolia, posed a great threat to the Ottoman Empire. These two great commanders “confronted each other near Ankara in the Çubuk plain (July 28, 1402). Bayezid was defeated and captured in the battle, and he died in captivity in Akşehir (March 8, 1403)” (İnalçık 233). Using this historical fact, Marlowe constructs Bayezid’s defeat as an anti-Turkish stance, presenting it to the audience.

Source text:

We hear the Tartars and the eastern thieves
Under the conduct of one Tamburlaine
Presume a bickering with your emperor
And thinks to rouse us from our dreadful siege
Of the famous Grecian Constantinople. (III.i.2-6)

Translation:

Aldığımız duyuma göre
Timurlenk denen birinin idaresinde
Tatarlar ve Doğulu haydutlar
İmparatorluğumuzla çatışmaya yelteniyormuş
Ve bizim ünlü Bizans kenti Konstantinopolis’teki kuşatmamızı*
Kaldırmamızı istiyorlarmış. (III.i.45)

*Translator’s note: Yıldırım Bayezid besieged Istanbul four times in 1391, 1395, 1396, and 1399. He lifted the siege when Timur entered Anatolia. Due to possible line differences between the source and target texts, page numbers are provided instead of line numbers.

Comparing the source and target excerpts, it is evident that certain choices in word selection, description, and ideological discourse ensure the reflection of Marlowe’s biased, derogatory portrayal of the Turkish image in the work. A lexical example is the translation of “emperor” as “imparatorluğumuz” (our empire), which explicitly reveals the partiality of the speaker. The description of Constantinople as an ancient Greek/Hellenistic city in the source text and as a Byzantine city in the Turkish text—and the translator’s

historical note for the readers—gives the impression that the translation is intended more for reading than for staging. Additionally, the use of the term Constantinople also reflects the anti-Turkish sentiment in the target text.

Despite these differences, Bayezid's character is translated with the same arrogant expressions and attitudes, reflecting the powerful and proud Turkish image. The phrase used for Timur ("Timurlenk denen biri" – someone called Tamburlaine) makes Timur seem like an insignificant person rather than someone who should be well-known. Referring to Timur's followers as "Doğulu haydutlar" (eastern thieves) suggests that Timur is not leading a proper army but a group of marauding, disorganized fighters without any allegiance to a country. Using a dismissive tone and phrases like "çatışmaya yelteniyormuş" (presume a bickering), implies that Timur is not capable of engaging in a proper conflict and is merely a troublemaker.

In the continuation of the mentioned scene, Bayezid, detailing the military strategy he will use to capture the city, is clearly portrayed as a Turkish threat to Europe. This depiction is reinforced when the Turkish sultan's defeat is followed by his words predicting Europe's celebration of the defeat and his hopes of punishing them for it.

Source text:

Now will the Christian miscreants be glad
Ringing with joy their superstitious bells
And making bonfires for my overthrow.
But ere I die those foul idolaters
Shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones. (III.iii.314-318)

Translation:

Şimdi Hristiyan kafırlar mutlu olmuştur
Pek sevdikleri çanlarını çalıyorlardır şimdi
Havai fişeklerle kutluyorlardır yenilgimi.
O rezil putperestler ben ölmeden önce
Pis kemikleriyle şenlik ateşi yakarlar yenilgime; (III.iii.62)

In the comparison between the source text and the translation, it is evident that the source text's religious and cultural elements are adapted in the

translation, maintaining the overall tone. The phrase “superstitious bells” in the source text is translated as “pek sevdikleri çanlarını” (their beloved bells), while “bonfires” is replaced with “havai fişeklerle” (fireworks). However, the last two lines of the source text, “But ere I die those foul idolaters / shall make me bonfires with their filthy bones,” are translated as “O rezil putperestler ben ölmeden önce / pis kemikleriyle şenlik ateşi yakarlar yenilgime” (those foul idolaters, before I die, shall make a bonfire with their filthy bones). This excerpt portrays the Turkish image as a threat to Europe, highlighting the negative feelings and attitudes Europeans had towards Turks. However, the Sultan’s cruelty, even in defeat, dreaming of taking revenge and inflicting pain, has been somewhat softened by the translator’s choice of words and rephrasing.

In the second part of the play, Marlowe stirs Christian prejudices against the Turks by writing about Turkish prejudices against Christians. For example, Bayezid’s son Orcanes expresses his reluctance to declare peace with the Christians and questions Gazellus about this. Gazellus responds:

Source text:

We are all glutted with Christians’ blood
And have a greater for to fight against.
Proud Tamburlaine that now in Asia
Near Guyron’s head doth set his conquering feet
And means to fire Turkey as he goes. (I.i.15-19)

Translation:

Hristiyan kanına doyduk artık
Asıl savaşmamız gereken daha büyük bir düşmanımız var:
Mağrur Timurlenk o saldırgan tavrıyla
Asya’da Guyron* kentinin surlarına dayandı
Ordularıyla ilerledikçe yangın yerine çevirecek Türkiye’yi. (I.i.110)

* Translator’s note: A settlement near the northwest of Aleppo.

The faithful translation of the source text features the translator’s historical/ geographical note (“*Translator’s note: A settlement near the northwest of

Aleppo”). The phrase “glutted with Christians’ blood” emphasizes the Turks’ killing of Christians, portraying them as barbaric and cruel, enhancing anti-Christian sentiments and creating a savage image of the Turks. The earlier-mentioned religious elements also reinforce the notion of “the other.” Orcanes refers to “Christian blood” and describes the slaughtering of Christians as something justified from the Muslim perspective. Timur is depicted as a leader with an army capable of burning and destroying Turkey, especially with the translator’s slight change of expression “o saldırgan tavıryla” (with that aggressive manner) while transferring “his conquering feet” in the original. With the translator’s slight touch on the meaning of the above lines, such a portrayal contrasts with the earlier example, highlighting the different perspectives between Christian and Muslim views.

In another part of the play, when Uribassa warns Orcanes about the armies of Sigismund recruited from Christian lands, Orcanes dismisses their skills. He assures his advisers that Turkish soldiers are capable of slaying their enemies.

Source text:
Our Turkey blades shall glide through all their throats And make this champion mead a bloody fen. (I.i.34-35)

Translation:
Biz Türklerin kılıçları boğazlarını kesmeye yeter Meydan savaşında o çayı kan bataklığına çevirir. (I.i.110)

In this example, Marlowe uses the image of the “Turkey blades” to enhance the threatening image of the Turks. By emphasizing their ability to turn a battlefield into a bloody fen, he portrays the Turkish army as a powerful and threatening force.

In the same scene, Orcanes reminds Sigismund of the historical victories of the Turks over Christian Europe, emphasizing the Turks’ capability and the fear they instilled.

Source text:

Stay Sigismund. Forgett'st thou I am he
That with the cannon shook Vienna walls
And made it dance with the continent

...

Forgett'st thou that I sent a shower of darts
Mingled with powdered shot and feathered steel
So thicke upon the blind-ey'd burghers' heads
That thou thyself then County Palatine
The King of Boheme and the Austric Duke
Sent heralds out which basely on their knees
In all your names desir'd a truce of me?
Forgett'st thou that to have me raise my siege
Wagons of gold were set out before my tent

...

How canst thou think of this and offer war? (I.i.96-98, 101-109, 112)

Translation:

Bak Sigismund unuttun mu yoksa
Viyana surlarını toparımla dövdüğümü
Ve çevresinde gökkubbenin döndüğü
Dünyanın eksenini sarsar gibi
Viyana'yı Avrupa kıtasında dans ettirdiğimi?

...

Unuttun mu ülkeni ok yağmuruna tuttuğumu
Güllelerimle ve göz açıp kapayıncaya kadar
Kasaba halkına art arda çelik uçlu oklarla saldırdığımı?
Ve sen kendin o zaman ülkenin kral naibiydin
Bohemya Kralı ve Avusturyalı bir dük olarak
Ulaklar göndermedin mi huzuruma
Onlar da önümde diz çöküp barış diye
Yalvarmamışlar mıydı bana?
Unuttun mu yoksa kuşatmayı kaldırmam için
Kanatlarında Jupiter'in korkunç yıldırımlarını taşıyan
Krallığın kartal simgesiyle damgalanmış
Bir araba altını çadırımın önüne gönderdiğini?

...

Nasıl böyle düşünür ve savaş önerirsin? (I.i.112)

In this monologue, Orcanes reminds Sigismond of the past Turkish victories over Christian Europe, highlighting the power of the Turks and the fear they have instilled. This portrayal of the Turks as a powerful, intimidating force is emphasized through the descriptions of past events where European rulers had to kneel and beg for peace, further reinforcing the image of the Turks as a significant threat.

Similarly, the Christian King Frederick persuades Sigismond to seek peace by reminding him of the horrors inflicted by the Turks in the past.

Source text:

Your majesty remembers I am sure
The cruel slaughter of our Christian bloods
These heath'nish Turks and pagans recently made
Betwixt the city Zula and Danubius;
How through the mist of Varna and Bulgaria
And almost to the very walls of Rome
They have not long since massacred our camp. (II.i.5-11)

Translation:

Majesteleri eminim hatırlıyorlardır
Bu barbar Türkler ve dinsiz kavimler
Zula kenti ile Tuna arasında
Varna ve Bulgaristan'da
Hatta Roma surlarına dayandıklarında
Çok sayıda Hristiyan'ın canını aldılar
Bizim ordumuzu kırıp geçirmelerinin üzerinden de
Pek uzun zaman geçmedi. (II.i.129)

In this passage, Frederick describes the Turks as “barbaric,” “heathen,” and “slaughtering Christian blood,” reinforcing the image of the Turks as a savage and destructive force. The phrase “killing many Christians” (çok sayıda Hristiyanın canını aldılar) and “breaking our army” (ordumuzu kırıp geçirmeleri) further emphasizes the fear and hatred towards the Turks, contributing to the portrayal of Turcophobia.

In the play, the Mongols are depicted as a hope for the survival of Christianity in the East and the destruction of Islam represented by the Turks. R. W. Southern notes that while the Mongols were a terrifying enemy, their geographical position meant that their first target would be Islamic lands, which could be an advantage for the West (44). This suggests a strong manipulation of biases for Western benefit.

In the first part of the play, Marlowe's Timur, once he replaces Bayezid as the most powerful ruler, speaks of freeing the Christian slaves held by the Turks.

Source text:

I that am term'd the scourge and wrath of God
The only fear and terror of the world
Will first subdue the Turk and then enlarge
Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves
Burdening their bodies with your heavy chains
And feeding them with thin and slender fare
And when they chance to breath and rest a space
Are punished with bastones so grievously
That they lie panting on the galley side
And strive for life at every stroke they give. (III.iii.53-63)

Translation:

Ben Tanrı'nın kamçısı ve gazabıyım
Dünyanın tek korku ve dehşet verici azabıyım
Önce Türk padişahını halledeceğiz
Sonra da köleleştirdiğiniz o Hristiyanları özgür bırakacağız
Ağır zincirlerle bellerini büktünüz
Aç bıraktınız onları az bir gıda verip
Küreğe mahkûm ettiniz Karadeniz'deki teknelerinizde
Biraz soluklanacak dinlenecek olsalar
Kırbaçla cezalandırdınız ağır bir biçimde
Kadırganın bir yanına yatarken soluk soluğa
Hayata tutunmaya çalıştılar her kırbaçta. (III.iii.54)

In both the source text and the translation, Timur is depicted as a hope for the liberation of Christian slaves held by the cruel Turks. This portrayal positions Timur as a defender of Christianity and an avenger against the Turks, reinforcing the negative image of the Turks and contributing to the perception of Turcophobia.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the examples and explanations throughout the analysis section, Marlowe uses the Turks in his work to evoke admiration for the character of Timur. The selected examples and their translations demonstrate that Marlowe stirs anti-Turkish sentiments and portrays the Turks as savage, warlike, and arrogant to elevate the character of Timur, depicting his rise, victories, fall, and destruction as a hero. Through discourse analysis and Bourdieu's habitus, the analysis reveals that Marlowe utilizes the Turcophobia and negative image of the Turks prevalent in his period to create a "paper hero" and reflects both the rise and fall of this hero in the excerpts provided.

As both "a European and a Christian" and working for the political aims of his country, England, it is natural and inevitable for Marlowe to have such a hostile attitude towards the Turks (Umunç 914). This directly reflects Bourdieu's habitus concept, where individual characteristics are shaped by and feed off the field and environment from the onset of socialization, representing Marlowe's European and contemporary perspectives.

To present the character of Timur as a hero to the English audience in the century he wrote the play, anti-Turkish sentiments and Turcophobia were two major assets. As seen in the examples provided, Marlowe skilfully uses the image of the Turk and its counterpart in both micro-discursive contexts, such as word choices and descriptions, and macro-discursive contexts, such as plot construction. The translator, adapting the spirit of the work for the Turkish reader, does not attempt to censor these elements but translates the work in a way that reflects Marlowe's habitus. Therefore, it is evident that the translation presents the work as a reflection of the Turcophobia prevalent in Europe of the past. Otherwise, it would not be very likely for a play about the rise and fall of a cruel ruler to attract as much interest and empathy as it did in the period it was staged. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, the image of the Turk is frequently used in Renaissance literature, but Marlowe

skilfully reflects this image and the fear associated with it, manipulating it to create empathy in the reader or audience, ultimately using it to elevate a hero who is essentially an anti-hero for Christian Europeans.

While the image of the Turk and Turcophobia are widely discussed in literature, especially in European literature, the reflection of this phenomenon on the Turkish audience through translation is relatively less examined. It is as important to study how this phenomenon, particularly if it involves prejudice, is reflected in the culture that is its subject, as it is to reveal its existence. In today's world, where societies do not live in isolation, it is crucial for countries, races, and similar social groups to know how others perceive them and to receive these perspectives uncensored and directly. This awareness can be the first step for the subject societies of prejudice to develop a strategy against it. It is important to conduct and share similar studies to raise awareness. Translation, which indirectly enables societies to get to know and communicate with each other, is particularly significant in understanding how the historical roots of the image of the Turk are perceived in an international context. This can only be achieved through a body of studies similar to the one presented in this article.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

Notes

- 1 All the Turkish secondary source references are translated by the author of this article.
- 2 For the historical roots and explanation of the term "Saracen", see C. Meredith Jones's "The Conventional Saracen of the Song of Geste" and John V. Tolan's *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*.
- 3 For detailed studies related to the fear of Turks in this era, see Coşan's *Tanrım Bizi Türklerden Koru and Kıyamet Alameti Türkler*.
- 4 The titular character of Marlowe's play is officially known as Timur, although his name has variations like Tamerlane or Tamburlaine in English and Timurlenk in Turkish.

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