

CAUCASIA BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN
EMPIRE AND IRAN, 1555 – 1914

Herausgegeben von
Raoul Motika und Michael Ursinus

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A Dagestani Intellectual Turned Ottoman: Multiple Identities in the Autobiographical Writings of Mizancı Murad

Christoph Herzog, Heidelberg

Mehmed Murad¹ was one of the immigrants into the Ottoman Empire who exerted a considerable influence on 19th century Ottoman intellectual life. He was born in 1854 in Urachi (Huraki), a small town near Derbent, Daghestan, to a Kadi-family of some local standing. After receiving first a traditional and then a Russian education in Timurhan Şura (Bujnaks) and Sewastopol he emigrated to Istanbul in 1873. He served in several governmental posts, became a teacher at the famous Academy of Administration, *Mülkiye*, published his influential weekly, *Mizan* (therefore his *lakab* Mizancı) and, from 1895 to 1897, became leader of the Young Turk opposition, when he fled to Egypt and Europe. However, in 1897 he was persuaded by an agent of the Sultan, Ahmed Celaleddin Pasha, to find reconciliation with the regime of Abdulhamid II. and to return to Istanbul, a move which later on was regarded as treason never to be forgiven by most Ottoman constitutionalists. Silenced until 1908 after the Young Turk coup of that year he tried to re-enter the political scene. But it quickly became clear that he had lost much of his former political and intellectual influence. Thus he had to content himself with publishing *Mizan*, but *Mizan* too never again reached the importance it had held before. The intellectual outline of this newspaper described as “Pan Islamic” and “committed to constitutional reform”² seems to have failed to meet the new trends of the Ottoman political discourse and to have appeared conservative and somewhat out of date.³ In any case it opposed the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) at an untimely stage when the high hopes connected with it were not yet thoroughly dispersed so that any opposition against that organisation and its policies was widely regarded (or successfully denounced) as being the domain of political reactionaries. Because of his opposition to the CUP Murad quickly ran into difficulties and after having expressed his sympathies for the counter-coup of 1909 (*31 Mart vakası*) he was tried and exiled to the island of Rhodes. Only in 1912, thanks to the amnesty issued by the government of Hüseyin Hilmi, he was allowed to return to Istanbul. At least until 1914 he participated

1 The most comprehensive biography is Birol Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey. Hayatı ve Eserleri* (Istanbul, 1979). Outdated for some details but still a valuable interpretation offers Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908* (2nd. ed. Istanbul, 1983), p. 63-103. For a short bio-bibliographical summary cf. *Eİ²*, “Mizancı Mehmed Mürâd” (M.O.H. Ursinus), p. 205f. Other biographical sketches include Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, “Mizancı Murad Bey,” *İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergi* 2.3-4 (1952), p. 67-88 and Christoph Herzog, *Geschichte und Ideologie: Mehmed Murad und Celal Nuri über die historischen Ursachen des osmanischen Niedergangs* (Berlin, 1996), p. 10-31.

2 Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam. Ideology and Organization* (Oxford, 1990), p. 33.

3 Cf. Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 391-399.

in the political debates in Istanbul but at the time of his death in 1917 he was a poor and largely forgotten man.⁴

His political and personal failure notwithstanding, Mehmed Murad forms a remarkable example of the many Caucasian immigrants to the Ottoman Empire. A prolific author he left a comparably rich fund of autobiographical writings which may be classified into four layers of self-explanation:

Murad obviously kept a day-to-day diary entitled "Alter Ego". In several of his published works he hints at the existence of such a diary⁵ which may be assumed to have consisted of several volumes of notebooks. In one instance he even offers a quotation from this diary which, he declares, he translated from the Russian. It may be concluded that the diary, at least in parts, was composed in that language. This most primary narrative of Murad's life and feelings, however, seems to be lost.⁶

A manuscript survives with the title "Hayal ve hakikat-i hal", being the draft (*müsvedde*) for Murad's book *Meskenet mazerat teşkil eder mi?*, describing his childhood and early youth.⁷ It has not been published and is only known through extensive quotations in Birol Emil's biography of Mehmed Murad. It is extremely interesting to note that while the text in part correlates with passages of the aforementioned book it contains very personal information that is missing in the printed version.

After Murad was sentenced to lifelong detention after the counter-coup of 1909 he wrote a whole set of memoirs containing autobiographical information as well as political analyses comprising a total of five books.⁸ The general tendency of the books is naturally defensive but (especially in *Meskenet*) Murad offers some psychological self-interpretation which goes beyond simple self-apology. Thus he holds the "impulsiveness" of his character responsible for many actions he undertook, only to regret them later.⁹ Tensions in the relation with his father which are obvious from the

4 The year 1912 as the time of Murad's death, widely given in the literature, is incorrect and probably goes back to an error in the article on Mehmed Murad in Alaeddin Gövsa's *Türk Meşhurları* (Istanbul, n.d.), p. 261. The correct date was already given by Babinger, *Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 392.

5 Cf. Herzog, *Geschichte und Ideologie*, p. 10, n. 3.

6 I owe this information to Professor Birol Emil. He told me that he did not find the diary among the personal papers of Mehmed Murad he obtained by the late granddaughter of Murad, Semine Dilek. According to Emil it was probably sold by Murad's son Faruk in great financial distress and in the end served as raw material for the folding of paper bags.

7 Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 21, n. 9.

8 These are: *Mücadele-i millîye. Gurbet ve avdet devirler* (Istanbul, 1226) (with the same title rendered in to Modern Turkish by Sabahattin Çağın and Faruk Gezgin (Istanbul, 1994)); *Hürriyet vadesinde bir pençe-i istibdad* (Istanbul, 1326); *Enkaz-i istibdad içinde züğürdün tesellisi* (Istanbul, 1329); *Tatlı emeller, acı hakikatler* (Istanbul, 1330). The latter three are rendered into the Latin alphabet by Celile Eren Ökten Argıt, *Mizancı Murad Bey'in II. Meşrutiyet Dönemi Hâtıraları* (Istanbul, 1995). The fifth book is *Meskenet mazeret teşkil eder mi?* (Istanbul, 1329).

9 *Meskenet*, p. 21f. Cf. the version in "Hayal ve hakikat-i hal", rendered in Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 446.

draft “Hayal ve hakikat-i hal” are largely neutralised in the printed version of *Meskenet*. However, traces of this tension still are tangible in the published book.

In 1890 Murad published a novel under the title *Turfanda mı yoksa turfa mı?*¹⁰ which clearly contains many autobiographical elements.¹¹ This was – at least partly – admitted by Murad himself in his memoirs published about twenty years later.¹² Moreover he signed some of his private letters sent from exile in Europe to his family in Istanbul with the name of the hero of that novel, Mansur.¹³ In this novel, too, there are hints at the diary “Alter ego” which, in the story, is kept by Mansur. Significantly, Murad anticipated in *Turfanda* some of the patterns he described for his childhood in *Meskenet*.

From the above it might be concluded that notwithstanding the loss of the diary a reconstruction of Murad's life in the literary genre of historical biography should stand a better chance than in the cases of many of his no less prominent Middle Eastern contemporaries, on whose lives sometimes even the most basic biographical data is lacking. There are, however, at least two severe problems that stand in the way of such an endeavour. First of all, despite its quantitative richness the biographical data given by Murad is still highly selective and fragmentary. For example, he is completely silent about the probable existence of at least one younger brother of his.¹⁴ Equally, we do not learn anything of his journalistic and other activities in Russia where he seems to have been known under the name of Amirov Gadži Murad.¹⁵ In the same line he passes over with silence his association to the *Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti* after 1908.¹⁶ These omissions referring to the level of factual data concerning his family background and his public life may be attributed to Murad's concern with his public image as well as to his pre-selection of relevant and irrelevant facts. This distinction gains precision and complexity in the light of the second problem of Murad's biographical writings, which evolves around his narrative interpretation. In the beginning of his draft “Hayal ve hakikat-i hal” he reflects on the reason that made him write it down:

“My aim is to describe (*tasvir*) the most troublesome (*buhranlı*) period of my life and to ease my conscience. But to get hold of the original reason for the crisis (*buhranın*

10 *Turfanda mı turfa mı* (Istanbul); *Milli roman* (Istanbul, 1308). With the same title put into modern Turkish by Birol Emil (Istanbul, 1980).

11 Murad's contemporaries generally seem to have regarded *Turfanda* as a “kind of autobiography”; cf. Martin Hartmann, *Unpolitische Reisebriefe aus der Türkei* (Leipzig, 1910), p. 213f, n. 66.

12 *Meskenet*, p. 39.

13 Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 473.

14 His biographer Emil was told by Zeki Velidi Togan of the existence of a younger brother of Murad named İskender Mirza, who – according to Togan – advocated the assimilation of the Muslims of Russia to Russian culture. Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 24, n. 19. To my knowledge, the only surviving written words of Murad which might be read as an – at least implicit – recognition of the existence of at least one younger brother (or sister) seems to be the following phrase contained in his “Hayal-i hakikat”: “pederimin büyük oğlu ben olmak hasebiyle kadı olmağa namzet idim” (*ibid.*, p. 22) to be translated as “as I was the eldest son of my father...”. Even this phrase, however, remained unpublished as it was not included in *Meskenet*.

15 İsa Chaliloviç Abdullaev, “Çelovek udivitel'noj sud'by,” *Sovetskij Dagestan* 1 (1968), p. 42f.

16 Cf. Sefer E. Bezerğ, *Kafkas Diasporası'nda Edebiyatçılar ve Yazarlar Sözlüğü* (Samsun, 1995), p. 185f. I owe this information to Dr. Alexandre Toumarkine.

hikmet-i asliyesi anlaşılmaq için) it will be necessary to know the circumstances and the reasons (*ahvâl ve esbâb*) that urged me to emigrate to the Ottoman Empire (*memâlik-i mahrusa*) with the aim to render service to the state. These circumstances and reasons are inseparably mingled with my biography.”¹⁷

This explanation is doubtlessly much more immediate to the author's mind than the complicated introductory justification for publishing *Meskenet* in which he makes use – among other arguments – of the common topos of having been urged by friends.¹⁸ It should be kept in mind, however, that even this seemingly authentic reflection by Murad is already entangled in a literary tradition and the narrative urge to make sense.¹⁹ In this respect it is important to note that Murad during parts of his life – especially while in exile in Europe during 1895-97 – suffered from mental disorder,²⁰ an experience he, not surprisingly, excluded from his narrative self-interpretation. As can be gathered from the above citation, the overarching theme of Murad's making sense of his life was his migration to the Ottoman Empire. He describes the psychological roots of his emigration which he locates in his early childhood. According to him, his family belonged to the pro-Ottoman party of the political factions in Daghestan. His father and grandfather took an active part in the rebellion of Şayh Şâmil. After the Russian occupation his family like many other in Daghestan nurtured the plan of an emigration (*hicret*) to Istanbul, the seat of the caliphate. This plan failed to materialise because his father who was banished by the Russian authorities to a distant town for a period of three years, changed his mind and became reconciled with the Russian domination.²¹ Although reduced by many details, the essential psychological message was maintained in its translation from the draft “Hayal” to the book *Meskenet*:

“What was my first thought? Although I was not able to understand what the meaning was of 'Istanbul', I believed it to be something good.”²²

And later, referring to his father's change of heart concerning his emigration to Istanbul:

“This came to be a grief to me, because [the ideas of] 'Istanbul' and 'emigration' had taken the form of an obsession (*illet şekli*) with me.”²³

The point here is that Murad (re-)constructs (and thereby recognises) the pre- and irrational roots of the “circumstances and causes” leading to his migration to Istanbul. No attempt is made by Murad to construct his emigration as an act that originally emerged exclusively from his will as an autonomous individual nor to depict it in a

17 Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 21, n. 10.

18 *Meskenet*, p. 2f.

19 For a spectre of narratological-psychological approaches to “making sense” cf. *Erzählung: Identität und historisches Bewußtsein: Die psychologische Konstruktion von Zeit und Geschichte* (Erinnerung und Identität 1), ed. Jürgen Straub (Frankfurt a.M., 1998).

20 In a letter to his wife and children in Istanbul Murad himself uses the term “nervous disease” (*sinir illeti*). Cf. Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 147 and 179.

21 *Meskenet*, p. 8-11.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 9f.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

simple ideological fashion as resulting from moral or religious obligation.²⁴ In “Hayal” the main focus of explanation seems to be centred around the inquiry of Murad’s character as a child and on personal memories,²⁵ while in *Meskenet*, by the omission of these passages, the historical attachment of Daghestan and its people to the Ottoman Empire as the seat of the caliphate gains relative importance. In any case the imprint of the specific circumstances of his youth in Daghestan is declared by Murad to have been an important factor in shaping his character. Whether we are inclined to believe in this sense-making construction or not (it seems to be advisable to be rather careful in trusting the memory),²⁶ the very fact that Murad did construct it gives it a factual status in its own right.²⁷ The quality of this construction furthermore suggests the necessity for inquiring about Murad’s identity as an immigrant to the Ottoman Empire. As the notion of “identity” is rather broad and not connected to a clear-cut concept it seems advisable to outline the somewhat restricted use I will make of it. What primarily interests me in the present context is the question of Murad’s ethnic identity and I will try to find traces of an answer, first of all in his memoirs. I should make it clear, however, that by “ethnic identity” I do not mean something like the “factual ethnic origin” of Mehmed Murad, of which I was not able anyway to find any reference anywhere in his writings that I have consulted.²⁸ The term “ethnic identity” as I use it here is a more or less loose adaption of the anthropological concept of ethnic identity,²⁹ based on the conception of identity as a circular outcome of the intersubjective mutual “mirroring” of human beings in a common environment.³⁰ It is important to stress this “mutuality” in the context of ethnicity especially in cases where a person constitutes an “ethnic anomaly” (Mary Douglas), i.e. someone who is “betwixt and between” (Victor Turner) ethnic

24 Such a religious interpretation of emigration from an area that had fallen into the hand of Non-Muslim as a – though not undisputed – religious duty would have been thoroughly possible. Cf. Fritz Meier, “Über die umstrittene Pflicht des Muslims, bei nichtmuslimischer Besetzung seines Landes auszuwandern,” *Der Islam* 68 (1991), p. 65-86.

25 A lengthy passage on that topic, given by Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 28ff, opens with the words “What kind of child may I have been? (*acaba ben nasıl bir çocuk idim?*)”. Cf. Herzog, *Ideologie und Geschichte*, p. 12.

26 For an early critique of the individual memory cf. Maurice Halbwachs, *Das kollektive Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt a. M., 1985), p. 1-33.

27 I am well aware of this being a sensitive point and of the huge amount of theoretical work done on the problem of the relation between text, meaning and reality. As it is, however, not possible to discuss this question in detail here I confine myself to the remark that I intend to keep a pragmatic middle way between the sceptical deconstructionist position as expressed in Derrida’s bonmot “il n’y a rien hors du texte” and the naive subject-centered approach that locates reality in the quest for the author’s intention. For a brilliant essay in defense of the critical accessibility of textual meaning cf. Umberto Eco, *Die Grenzen der Interpretation* (München-Wien, 1992).

28 Fuat Süreyya Oral in his *Türk Basın Tarihi 1831-1921* ([Ankara] [1967]), p. 180 writes of Murad as a “Caucasian Lesghian” without giving a source. This information is not very precise as “Leski” is widely used simply to denote Daghestani people.

29 Cf. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives* (London, 1993), p. 59-77.

30 Cf. Thomas Luckmann, “Persönliche Identität, soziale Rolle und Rollendistanz,” *Identität*, eds. Odo Marquard and Karlheinz Stierle, (Poetik und Hermeneutik 8), p. 299ff.

boundaries.³¹ While it is more or less possible – depending on the respective society an individual lives in – to choose an identity (corresponding with the view of Frederic Barth that ethnicity constitutes “a system of mutually exclusive self-ascriptions”),³² the ascription undertaken by *others* may also contribute to creating ethnicity. People may be *forced* to take on an ethnic identity, even if they would have preferred not to.³³ This means that the ethnic ascription people who are in “betwixt and between” may be suffered or chosen or both as there might be an interrelation between self-ascription and suffered ascription. I will argue that Mehmed Murad constituted such an ethnic anomaly in that he had several ethnic identities at his disposal and that the way he made use of them was not solely that of “entrepreneurs or cultural brokers who turn the classificatory ambiguities to their own advantage”³⁴ but that he also suffered from ethnical ascription and exclusion. As already mentioned above the years after his return from Europe to Istanbul saw Murad in a rather defensive situation.³⁵ In 1908 when the end of the autocratic rule of Abdülhamid promised better times to his political opponents, Murad was excluded from the CUP, arrested for several days in the ministry of war and booed when he wanted to make a statement during a public meeting.³⁶ Not that he was completely without friends and supporters. This is shown by his membership in the *Çerkes İttihad ve Teaviün Cemiyeti* as well as by the fact that when he stood for a seat in the Ottoman parliament during the elections of that year he received 16 votes of the electors, which was only two less than the votes given to Kâmil Paşa and Prince Sabaheddin.³⁷ Yet in the introduction of his book *Meskenet* which was written during his exile after the trial of 1909 he declared that he did not intend to reenter the Ottoman political scene even if a general amnesty gave him back his freedom of action because he expected nothing than hostile treatment.³⁸

The reasons for this hostility he explains in the beginning of the following chapter as follows:

“Before Dagestan was occupied by the Russians it consisted of four major Khanates and one republic based on the Shariah (*cumhuriyet-i şer’iye*). I was born in the part of the republic. This means that I did not inherit the ability to bow my head modestly in front of the powerful. I was haunted by the ‘illness’ (*illet*) to explain the character and the limits of everything within the framework of rational facts and to build up my own notion accordingly.

31 Eriksen, *Ethnicity*, p. 62.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

33 *Ibid.*

34 *Ibid.*

35 Cf. Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 191ff. The German orientalist Martin Hartmann reports that when he mentioned Murad's name in a Pasha's home in 1901 he met with stony silence; Hartmann, *Unpolitische Reisebriefe*, p. 214

36 Cf. Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 205ff.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 212.

38 *Meskenet*, p. 3f.

Time passes by, situations and places change. But a good principle (*akide-i makbule*) planted into a young heart remains the same as a original essence is not spoiled.

This is the reason why I was – and will always be – displeasing to the powerful. It is not ambition or envy. While I am free of these evils, maybe more than any Ottoman is, it has pleased my critics to use them as pretending argument against me.”³⁹

This passage contains the theoretical basis of Murad's interlinking of his childhood with his present crisis discussed above, as well as its practical application for his defence. The principles which were instilled in him in his childhood are depicted as positive and as implicitly religiously sanctioned. Criticism is lanced against the Ottoman political establishment and a difference is established between him and “any Ottoman”, a difference that entails a comparison in his favour. Murad as an immigrant (one may conclude) did not “feel” himself as an Ottoman. This conclusion will have to be qualified. But before we can do so, we need to discuss any positive statements regarding the ethnic identity of Mehmed Murad which focuses on his homeland Daghestan. Referring to an ethnic stereotype he writes e.g.

“Although I am a Daghestani I never got used to carry a weapon with me (*Dağistanlı olduğum halde silah taşımaya alışmadım*).”⁴⁰

It can be safely assumed that Murad's connexion with his Daghestani origin was not limited to allusions in his autobiographical writings but had thoroughly practical consequences for his life in the Ottoman Empire. The Daghestani community in the Ottoman Empire seems to have upheld a certain moral obligation to mutual solidarity. Thus Murad after his migration to Istanbul lived in the household of Şirvanizade Mehmed Rüşdi Pasha who was of Daghestani origin. In a similar way, Murad tells his readers that he felt obliged to house several Daghestanis in his home in Anadolu Hisarı despite the fact that they were banned from Istanbul, because “to refuse [them] would have been against all Daghestani custom”.⁴¹

Occasionally, however, Murad in his writings seems to extend the definition of his original homeland from Daghestan to the whole of the Caucasian area. In a remark by which he tries to explain why he trusted the agent of Sultan Abdulhamid, the “serhafiye” Ahmed Celaleddin Paşa, who successfully tried to convince Murad to give up his Young Turk activities in Paris and return to Istanbul, Mehmed Murad claims that it was because Celaleddin Paşa was a Circassian and adds:

“The Circassians are like the Dagestanis children of Caucasia and they bear the characteristics that are esteemed by the Caucasians. From this point of view it was natural that I felt closeness to all Circassians and that I looked upon them as compatriots.”⁴²

39 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

40 *Aci Hakikatlar*, p. 218 (271). The numbers in parentheses indicate the pagenumbers references to the Latin transcriptions of Murad's books referred to above in footnote 8. For another example cf. *Mücahede-i milliye*, p. 80 (81), where he speaks of the mountains of Daghestan as the “cradle of my existence”.

41 *Mücahede-i milliye*, p. 233 (220).

42 *Ibid.*, p. 231 (219).

Again, his membership of the *Çerkes İttihad ve Teavün Cemiyeti* (Circassian Society for Union and Mutual Aid) demonstrates another practical dimension of that view.

These diaspora-identities of Murad as a Caucasian immigrant are supplemented by his attachment to the Ottoman Empire, which – lying at the very base of his autobiographical construction – includes emotional, religious, ideological and practical ties and, in *Meskenet*, is depicted as a historical consequence of his Daghestani identity:

“Through all the times the Islamic caliphate was Daghestan's centre of hope (*kible-i âmâl*). As for centuries the Ottoman sultanate was a twin to the Islamic caliphate, the original Islamic zeal (*hamiyet-i asliye-i islamiye*) of the Daghestanis took the shape of an Ottoman ardour (*gayret-i osmaniye*).”⁴³

It is most important to note that in the passage quoted above the affinity of the Daghestanis for the Ottoman Empire is explained by the religious-political tie established by the Islamic caliphate. It is the latter institution that counts, the sultanate being its mere political manifestation. This conception of the caliphate, however, was a far cry from the classical Islamic doctrine of the *imāma al-kubrā*.⁴⁴ As a politically relevant concept it was derived from the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) in which a spiritual connection of the Crimean Muslims with the Ottoman sultan in his function as caliph was established. The twin character of the Ottoman power was lucidly expounded by a contemporary of Mehmed Murad, the Syrian theologian and politician ‘Abdalhamīd az-Zahrāwī (d. 1916).⁴⁵ “It is necessary”, he wrote,

“that the sons of our Ottoman fatherland remember, that some of the other nations too are connected with it. These are the Muslims who are linked to it through the caliphate as is laid down in the constitution. The Ottoman fatherland is a political fatherland (*vaṭan siyāsī*) for the Ottomans, be they Muslim or Non-Muslim; and it is a religious fatherland (*vaṭan dīnī*) for the Muslims, be they Ottoman or Non-Ottoman.”⁴⁶

Although – as we have seen above – he was aware of that distinction, Mehmed Murad in other parts of his writings blurred and diffused that twin function of Ottoman power. After his “emigration from Russia in the hope of joining the ranks of those trying to establish the constitutional regime (*meşrutiyet usulünü ihdas etmek yolunda çalışanlara*

43 *Meskenet*, p. 8.

44 This was reflected in the writings of traditionalist Arab Ḥanafī theologians; cf. Fritz Steppat, “Kalifat, *Dār al-Islām* und die Loyalität der Araber zum osmanischen Reich bei ḥanafitischen Juristen des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *V. Congrès international d'arabisants et d'islamistes Bruxelles 31 Août – 6 Septembre 1970*, p. 443-462.

45 A biographical overview is given by Ahmed Tarabein: “‘Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi: The Career and Thought of an Arab Nationalist,” *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi et al. (New York, 1991), p. 97-119. For Zahrāwī's concept of Ottomanism cf. Christoph Herzog, “‘Abd al-Ḥamīd az-Zahrāwī und das Problem des Osmanismus, 1908-1916,” Unpublished M.A. thesis University of Freiburg i.Br., 1988.

46 Ğawdat Rikābī and Ğamīl Sulṭān (eds.), *al-İrṭ al-fikrī bi-l-muṣliḥ al-iğtimā'ī ‘Abdulḥamīd az-Zahrāwī* (Damaskus, 1965), p. 35.

iltihak etmek emeliyle Rusya'dan hicret edişim)⁴⁷ he became an Ottoman.⁴⁸ Thus his religious and his political fatherlands (to use Zahrāwī's terminology) fell in one:

“With my heart full of zeal to render self-sacrificing good services I came from Daghestan and entered the service of the fatherland (*vatan*).”⁴⁹

In fact Murad's position as an Ottoman contained the same ambivalence as does the word “*vatan*”. In Şemsüddin Sami's *Kamus-i türki* of 1890 that notion is defined as “a man's place of birth and growing up or where he lives (*bir adamın doğub büyüdüğü veya yaşadığı memleket*)”.⁵⁰ In this particular meaning the word was largely interchangeable with “*memleket*”.⁵¹ On the other hand, “*vatan*” had become the corresponding term of the French “*patrie*”⁵² and had gathered a heavily ideological connotation.⁵³ It was this latter meaning that was referred to by Zahrāwī, and Murad himself mostly used the word in this sense. The ideological connotations of “*patrie*” in the nineteenth century involved a growing contamination of that notion with nationalist as well as racist conceptions. In the Ottoman Empire this development led to a redefinition of the term “*Türk*” from its former pejorative denomination for a blockhead, loud or clodhopper to a “national” ethnic ascription⁵⁴ and to the gradual identification of Ottoman with Turkish. Contrary to what one may expect, Murad not only ideologically agreed with that development but did his best to help it. Thus in his monumental *Tarih-i Ebülfaruk*, an unfinished seven-volume history of the Ottoman Empire which he wrote during his exile in Rhodos he criticizes that Arabization (*arablaşmak*), Iranization (*acemleşmek*) and Westernization (*frenkleşmek*) “had made us [!] lose our Turkishness (*türklük*)”. He complains that while Ottoman writers had composed thousands of volumes in Persian and Arabic it was only the Ottoman journalist and writer İbrahim Şinasi (1826-1871) who felt obliged to produce a book that “dealt with the grammar of our mother tongue (*ana lisanımız*) in a serious way”.⁵⁵ However, when describing Ottoman Turkish as “our mother tongue” Murad obviously had forgotten that when he

47 *Hürriyet vadisinde*, p. 73 (77).

48 The constitution of 1876 (article 8) defined any subject of the Ottoman Empire, Muslim or not, as Ottoman (*Osmanlı*). Cf. Server Feridun, *Anayasalar ve Siyasi Belgeler* (Istanbul, 1962), p. 14-25.

49 *Mücadele-i milliye*, p. 346 (322).

50 Şemsüddin Sami, *Kamus-u turki* [reprinted as:] *al-Mu‘şam at-turkiya al-ürātīya* (Beirut, 1989), p. 1493. In a similar vein Redhouse in his *Turkish and English Lexicon* (Istanbul, 1890) gives the meaning of *vatan* as “1. one's home 2. one's native place or country. 3. a stable, shed, or fold for beasts; a coop for fowls. *vatan-i asli* one's native place or native country.” (p. 2141).

51 Even the expression of “*asıl vatanım*” is not used in an unambiguous way by Murad. For two examples of the usage of “*asıl vatanım*” cf. *Hürriyet vadisinde*, p. 53 (60) and p. 72 (76), the first referring to Daghestan, the second to the Ottoman Empire.

52 Cf. Şemsüddin Sami, *Dictionnaire Turc-Français* (Istanbul, 1885), p. 1153 and Julius Theodor Zenker, *Türkisch-arabisches-persisches Handwörterbuch*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1866-1876), vol. 2, p. 933.

53 Cf. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London etc., 1961), p. 328ff.

54 This process is described by David Kushner: *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism 1876-1908* (London, 1977). For the change of meaning of “*Türk*” cf. *ibid.*, p. 20f.

55 *Tarih-i Ebülfaruk*, vol. 4 (Istanbul, 1328), p. 35.

came to Istanbul in 1873 he had to have his first conversation with the famous Midhat Pasha in French because he did not speak that language.⁵⁶

Despite the prevalence in Murad's writing of "vatan" in the ideological sense of a nation's fatherland the question of origin was not a *quantité négligeable* in his worldview. Mansur İbn-i Galib, the hero of his novel "*Turfanda mı yoksa turfa mı?* (Avant-garde or aberration?)" comes to Istanbul like Murad – but from Algeria rather than from Daghestan. Different from Murad, Mansur's family is described as being of Anatolian origin, having migrated to Algeria in the 17th century. This background allows Mansur in a discussion with the Algerian nationalist Ahmed Şunûdî to call himself an Ottoman Turk which is doubted by Ahmed:

"Ahmed: You are an Ottoman and a Turk? Your name is İbn-i Galib and your fatherland (*vatan*) is the Wâdî Aḥmar.

Mansur: The fatherland of the Muslims is Islam (*Müslümanların vatanı dindir*), their name is 'believer' (*ehl-i iman*) and they are soldiers of the caliph of the Prophet. I am, thank God, a Muslim. Moreover, you probably don't know that our fathers are true Turks from Kütahya."⁵⁷

Here, in a rather subtle way, a "Pan-Islamic identity" is combined with an ethnic ascription. It is remarkable how the text betrays itself. Although the Algerian "vatan" of Mansur is given no importance, the Turkish origins of his forefathers which is described in precisely the same way in terms of geographic attachment is something that matters. Actually, it is not Islam but the more distant origin (Kütahya) that prevails over a more recent one (Algeria). Although it is mere speculation, it may be assumed that Murad felt his non-Ottoman origins as a disadvantage and that it was for that reason that he equipped his hero Mansur with forefathers from Kütahya. In any case, his political (and sometimes personal) enemies in the CUP and its associated Newspapers such as *Tanin* didn't hesitate to speculate about Murad's Russian connections⁵⁸ and to denounce him as a traitor of the Ottoman fatherland (*vatan haini*).⁵⁹ There is at least one example that explicitly demonstrates how Murad's origin could be explicitly turned against him, but it may be safely assumed that the blame of his being non-Ottoman by birth was the silent background of many other accusations by his critics. In 1895, while Murad was in Egypt as a member of the Young Turk movement, the newspaper *İkdam* wrote in an article on him:

"His childhood is obscure. It is said that he himself hesitates to show the grave of his grandfather because of the extreme obscurity of his family. [...] He is not born in the Ottoman capital. He was brought up listening to the music of the cradle of misery in a desert of wilderness in Daghestan that lacks all civilization."⁶⁰

56 Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 56, n. 62.

57 *Turfanda*, p. 207 (182f).

58 *Hürriyet vadisinde*, p. 56 (62).

59 *Tatlı emeller*, p. 103 (203).

60 "Keşf-i nikab," *İkdam* 565 (5 Şubat 1311), p. 1; quoted in Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey*, p. 146.

Thus it must be assumed that it had a specific connotation when after the imprisonment of Murad late in 1908 the agreement between Murad and the minister of public order, Sami Bey, that Murad should undertake a journey and stay away from Istanbul for some time was interpreted in some newspapers to the effect that Murad “was driven out from the memleket and was banned to the place he was originally from.”⁶¹ In his defense Murad insisted on his incomparable merits for the Ottoman fatherland and made a subtle differentiation between him and the Ottomans thus implicitly pointing towards his non-Ottoman origin.

“I am absolutely sure that if the sum of all sacrifices delivered for the fatherland is taken there will be no Ottoman who will reach half the sum I have brought together. I am ready to prove this any time to those possessing insight.”⁶²

The ethnic identities of Mehmed Murad as constructed in his writings were such multiple and depending on the specific context: Islamic, Ottoman, Turkish, Caucasian, Daghestani. It must be kept in mind, however, that there is no guarantee that the patterns of identities which are textually expressed and identities which are attributed on the basis of socio-psychological observation are to be cast in the same mould or even that they at least do overlap. It is clear that no contention can be made that any close reading of any text whatsoever can be expected to bridge this gap. Still with this basic reservation in mind it is hoped that the above analysis has demonstrated that ethnic identity of a Caucasian immigrant in the framework of the late Ottoman Empire naturally was a complex phenomenon. Recognizing this complexity may contribute to a better understanding of the contradictional moves made by Mehmed Murad during his career as an Ottoman.

61 *Hürriyet vadisinde*, p. 54-56 (60-62).

62 *Tatlı emeller*, p. 101 (202).