

The Legacy of Pietro Canonica's Art and His Travels in Turkey

Pietro Canonica'nın Türkiye'deki Seyahatleri ve Eserleri

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Abstract: Specialized in monumental and commemorative works in bronze and marble, Italian sculptor, professor, and Senator Pietro Canonica's (1869-1959) contributions to the history of sculpting were numerous. Although his works range from Italy to Russia, he has a prominent place in the new established Republic of Turkey. Due to the fact that the representation of the human form had been forbidden during the Ottoman Period, there was no Turkish sculptors trained to produce the figurative Atatürk sculptures and thus the government turned to European artists. In this respect, Canonica's fame was going to bring him to Turkey in 1926 by the newly-established government's call for competition with the intention of creating and erecting Mustafa Kemal's monuments in prominent cities of the country. In this study, his works in Turkey, along with his travel account will be explored through both textual and historical analysis.

Keywords: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Pietro Canonica, Travel Writing, Sculpting, Architecture

Öz: Bronz ve Mermer heykeller üzerine uzmanlaşmış olan İtalyan sanatçı Pietro Canonica (1869-1959) sadece bir heykeltıraş değil aynı zamanda öğretim üyesi ve politikacı olarak görev yapmıştır. Şüphesiz ki Canonica'nın heykel tarihine katkısı çok yönlüdür. Çalışmaları İtalya'dan Rusya'ya, Kolombiya'ya kadar dünyanın pek çok yerinde ün kazanmıştır. Tüm bu çalışmalarının yanı sıra Canonica'nın Türkiye Cumhuriyeti nezdinde önemli bir yeri vardır. Osmanlı döneminde insan tasvirlerinin sanatsal olarak yasak olması nedeniyle, imparatorluğun yıkılmasından hemen sonra Atatürk heykellerini yapacak bir heykeltıraş bulmak olanaksızdı. Dolayısıyla, yeni Türk hükümet yüzünü Avrupalı sanatçılara çevirmek zorunda kalır. Bu anlamda Canonica'nın ünü onu 1926 yılında Türkiye'ye sürükler. Yeni kurulmuş olan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti hükümeti onu bir heykel yarışması için Türkiye'ye davet eder. Sonuçta Türkiye'nin çeşitli noktalarına Atatürk anıt abideleri inşa eder. Bunun yanı sıra Canonica'nın Türkiye'de bulunduğu dönemde hatıraları ve mektupları da mevcuttur. Bu çalışmada Canonica'nın eserleri ve anıları tarihsel ve metin analizi yoluyla incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Pietro Canonica, Seyahat Edebiyatı, Heykeltıraş, Mimari

1. Introduction

Specialized in monumental and commemorative works in bronze and marble, Italian sculptor, professor, and Senator Pietro Canonica's (1869-1959) contributions to the history of sculpting were various. Although his works range from Italy to Russia, he has a prominent place in terms of the new established Republic of Turkey. In this study, his works in Turkey, along with his account will be explored through both textual and historical analysis. Before the analysis of his works in the newly established Republic, it is worth giving monograph of Pietro Canonica. He was born in Moncalieri, northern Italy in March 1, 1869. His long and famous artistic career put forth at an early age when he caught the chance of becoming an apprentice to Luca Gerosa. After his apprenticeship, he was accepted to the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts of Turin where he was personally instructed by Odoardo Tabacchi in the art of sculpting and

became an attentive and enthusiastic guardian of the Italian artistic tradition. During his apprentice years, he also attended many art exhibitions in Turin and Milano with his bronze and marble statues and even, some of his art works were awarded in 1893 such as *Dopo il Voto*.¹ After this date, the fruitful years had begun in terms of his art works. Most of these works are the portrait busts of the prominent families' mausoleum in and around Turin. For instance, Gibello (1889) family was among the mausoleums of Canonica long with the other names such as Dumontel (1895), Boetti (1892), Bianco (1893), Aghemo (1894), Cornagliotti (1895), Falletti (1895), Giordano (1896).

Canonica finished his famous *Crocifisso* for Sacro Cuore Cathedral in 1894 and this work became the centre of the attention among the people in an exhibition that was held in 1899. In the meantime, he was working on the portraits of some of the famous English families such as Earl of Portland Arthur James Cavendish and his family. In the beginnings of the twentieth century, in the museums of both Italy and various European countries Canonica's works had begun to take place: especially, one of his works, namely *Monument to Tommaso Vallauri*, a funerary monument in bronze sculpture, was a significant milestone for reflecting the concrete reality and the dominancy in expression. Like many other works, he used plastering technique in this piece (see figure 2). In later decades, statues and sculptures of famous figures was going to brought him an international recognition and fame. The famous poet Riccardo Selvatico's sculpture in the Gardens of S. Elena Venice (1903), Edward VII's (King of England) marble statue (1903-1904), and Vittorio Emanuele's (King of Italy) statue are few among his other prominent works.

From Buckingham Palace to the court of the Tsar Nikolai II, countless aristocratic faces saw their most secret interiority modelled in marble thanks to Canonica. World War I ended this world of him, which constituted a reference point for Canonica, as well as his main market, and he devoted himself to large scale monumental and celebrative works. For example, the war memorials honouring the dead of the World War I in many Italian squares (piazzas) are the works of Pietro Canonica. In 1922, he moved to Rome and worked there until his death in 1959. As it is mentioned before, he contributed many exhibitions in Paris, Venice, London, Rome, Brussels and Petersburg. He was also a member of the *Accademia di San Luca* as well as numerous other foreign and Italian academies, in 1929 he was elected to the Italian Academy and in 1950 he became a permanent senator.²

Canonica has always been known as a sculptor but during his early ages, he was also interested in music and musicology. In this regard, he studied composing with some masters of the time such as Cravero and Veneziani. From 1912 onwards, he began to wrote various songs, occasional pieces, and five lyric operas. He began his first attempt with a melodrama namely *The Wife of Corinth*. There followed a number of other works, all inspired by classical texts, but with very dramatic contents such as Miranda, based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

2. Canonica and His Works in Turkey

Through his works, Pietro Canonica's aim in arts was to study and search the truth in its purest form, focusing on the greatest possible emotion on it. With this, Canonica asserts his taste for the arts in which capable of idealizing and yet at the same time expressing the deepest emotions of the soul. In his sculptures he attempts to combine the proportions and the balance

¹ Exhibited and awarded with a gold medal at the Paris Salon of 1891, and then passed to the Goupil gallery. For this work see Figure 1 at the end of this work.

² Arnoldi, F. Negri and Caraci, M. "Canonica, Pietro." *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Vol. 18, 1975. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-canonica_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/pietro-canonica_(Dizionario-Biografico))

of the classical art, the refined models of the Renaissance Italian sculptors, the lightness of neoclassical age, with Romantic touch and nineteenth century sensibility. His mastery of technique and great ability and speed in working the material took the attention of the times' many aristocracies of Europe and his works were appreciated among the aristocratic circles. Although these were the years of avant-garde, Canonica continued to create classical art, remaining faithful to his image of himself and his own instinct to trust in beauty and harmony.

Canonica's fame in Russia with his large scale monumental and incisive works attracted the attention in many other countries and among these, newly established Turkish Republic was important.³ "Due to the fact that the representation of the human form had been forbidden during the Ottoman Period, there was no Turkish sculptors trained to produce the figurative Atatürk sculptures and thus the government turned to European artists."⁴ In this respect, Canonica's fame was going to bring him to Turkey in 1926; the newly-established government's call for competition to get Mustafa Kemal's monuments to be created and erected in some prominent cities of the country eventually carried him to Turkey. After Mustafa Kemal's victory in the Turkish War of Independence, the great leader commissioned Canonica to design a series of commemorative monuments.⁵ As a result, he sculpted the Atatürk Monument in Zafer Square in Ankara (1927), the Monument of the Republic in Taksim Square in Istanbul (1928) and the Atatürk Monument in Izmir (1932). All these significant works of Canonica would become not only the iconic memories of the big battle of independence but also the very first touches of the Italian style in Turkey. First of all, he travelled to Istanbul and then passed to Ankara to meet Mustafa Kemal and there, he began his preliminary sketches (see Figure 3). This first sketch had been completed by Canonica in four days and well-liked by Mustafa Kemal. While undertaking the work, the great leader was standing still in front of the artist and Canonica had probably the chance to observe Mustafa Kemal in detail personally. As Canonica was master in reflecting the deepest emotions in his works, it was crucial for him to observe the figure in person.⁶

After he had finished the sketches of Mustafa Kemal's busts in Ankara, the artist went back to Turin and finished the monuments the one which is in front of the Ethnographical Museum of Ankara and the other at Zafer Square. In his second visit to Turkey, Canonica stayed in Istanbul because he was elected by the competition committee to make the Monument at Taksim Square; in fact, every candidate participated in this competition with his/her modelled sketch monument. The monument was finished in two and a half year in the workshop of Canonica in Rome with the help of two young Turkish architects namely Ali Hadi Bara and Sabiha Ziya Bengütaş.⁷ Not only did he visit the major cities of Turkey, but also he

³ Besides statues of Mustafa Kemal, he sculpted the statue of Alexander II in Leningrad, King Faysal's statue in Baghdad and Bolivia's statue in Colombia.

⁴ Avşar in Anthony Downey. *Dissonant Archives: Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East*. London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015. p. 347.

⁵ Nurullah Berk and Hüseyin Gezer. *50 Yılın Resim ve Heykeli*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 1973.p. 157-73.

⁶ Gültekin Elibal. *Atatürk ve Resim Heykel*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1973. p. 202.

⁷ Aylin Ü. Tekiner. *Atatürk Heykelleri: Kült, Estetik, Siyaset*. İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2010. p. 97, Ahmet Banoğlu writes how Bengütaş and Hadi Bara were selected by the Committee: "While the Taksim Monument was sculpted in Rome, a competition was held in Academy of Fine Arts in Turkey by a committee for electing a sculptor to be an apprentice to Canonica. In the end of the competition, a young girl namely Sabiha Ziya was elected as the winner and second place was taken by a young male student namely Hadi Bey. But The Atatürk Monuments Committee was hesitant about sending this young female to Rome. Because, she was not married, 22 years old, she could read and write French, could understand the oral language but she was lack of practice in speaking the language. On the other hand, Hadi Bey was competent in using French but the real reason why the Committee was hesitant about Sabiha Ziya was her gender. First of all, the committee sent a letter to Canonica for asking his opinion about a

travelled all around Anatolia; Kayseri, Tokat, Sivas, and Samsun.⁸ According to Rossi, Canonica even prepared another monument sketch for Samsun (a town in North Black Sea region), he left the town before he could manage to complete this project. Right after his return to the capital, he moved to Izmir for another task. As it is understood from Canonica's memoir, probably this was the last work undertaken by Canonica in Turkey because his last notes on Turkey end in Izmir. Apart from his memoir on Turkey, some other random notes or letters were found by his wife after Canonica's death. Among these excerpts, Canonica also gives his impressions about the Turkish experience during his stay in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir.⁹

Depending on his wife's statements, this letter was sent to Benito Mussolini (1883-1945). Starting by the famous "March on Rome" in 1922, Mussolini gained power in Italy and declared his fascist dictatorship. It is understood from this letter that there was a close interaction between Mussolini and Canonica.¹⁰ In this letter he tries to expose his observations on new established Republic and impressions about Mustafa Kemal whom Canonica got to know personally. This report/letter's large part is about the Italian interests in Turkey and Levantines in Istanbul. All in all, the conditions of the young Republic are transferred to Mussolini by Canonica's own cultural baggage. Perhaps, he had been appointed for transferring the conditions of this land by Mussolini before he travelled to Turkey or vice versa.¹¹ "We do not know for certain that Canonica was a direct mediator between Mustafa Kemal and Mussolini. We do know, however, that between 1924 and 1928 both countries looked for ways to improve their relationship, which engendered a period of warmth in Italian-Turkish relations between 1928 and 1932."¹² In the beginning of the 1930s, foreign sculptors, painters, and architects were expected to be the mediators between the newly emerging secular modern Turkish Republic and the European countries through the expression of their art works.¹³ This modernization project was inspired by the Western norms and paralleled by secularization and homogenization of the country.¹⁴

In Turkey, Canonica erected his first monumental project in an open field (namely Namazgah Hill) in front of the Ankara Ethnographical Museum in October 29, 1927.¹⁵ This statue exposes Mustafa Kemal on a horse, in a military uniform, staring ahead. In the same year, another Mustafa Kemal in marshal's uniform monument was erected in Zafer Square in Ankara. As it is mentioned above, a year later, Canonica exhibited his famous monument in Taksim Square, Istanbul. A committee was formed to give this task to the artist who could reveal the "values of the newly founded Republic" in a monument. Therefore, "the design-sketch was eventually prepared by Pietro Canonica in 1926 and was presented to Mustafa Kemal through the above-mentioned committee. Upon Mustafa Kemal's consent to this preliminary sketch, Canonica was given the task of sculpting the monument."¹⁶

female apprentice. In his response, Canonica's opinion was in the favor of male apprentice since he thought that for an art like sculpting, male apprentice artist were better in engaging the work.

⁸ Rossi Ettore. "TURCHIA." *Oriente Moderno*, vol. 7, no. 7, 1927, p. 314. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25807825.

⁹ Semavi Eyice. *Atatürk ve Pietro Canonica*. Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1986. p. 9. [My Translation]

¹⁰ Age, p.9

¹¹ Age, p.9

¹² Faik Gür. *Sculpting Turkish Nationalism: Atatürk Monuments in Early Republican Turkey*. Unpublished PhD thesis. The University of Texas at Austin. December 2006. p.118.

¹³ Age, p. 55

¹⁴ Reşat Kasaba. "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities," in S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*. Washington: University of Washington Press, 1997. p. 16

¹⁵ Eyice, age, p. 9 and Gür, age, p. 62

¹⁶ Elibal, age, p. 205-208

The monument in Izmir designed as a memorial aiming to reflect the spirit of the last phase of the Independence War. With this, it was aimed to keep the memories of the spirit fresh, a spirit formed during the War as a collective consciousness. During the War, Turkish people became a national body under one leader, one country, one history, and one culture. His index finger is symbolic in this statue as it reflects the “oneness” of the people with the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (see figure 4). This last statue of Canonica in Izmir produced as an equestrian in bronze statue, presenting Mustafa Kemal on horseback pointing to the Mediterranean. Different from the statues in Ankara, there is no military cloak on the Atatürk figure.

The common future of Mustafa Kemal monuments by Canonica represent him with sharp looking facial expressions, either in military uniform or civilian attire. The statue sculpted by Canonica and placed in Ankara, Zafer Square (Victory Square), portrays him standing in military uniform (cloak) and holding the hilt of a sword in front of him with his both hands; it was constructed on a marble base pedestal and its material is bronze similar to the other creations of Canonica in Turkey (see figure 5). In this statute, the figure’s (Atatürk) attire is motionless and solid. The figure stands on a high base pedestal and there are wreaths on each sides of the pedestal. Canonica also erected another bust of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in civilian attire. In the subsequent periods, small-scale copies of this bust had been sent to many small Anatolian towns of the new Republic (figure 3).

The important issue, however, was Istanbul and its inhabitants’ perceptions of the symbols of the new Republic. For the new Republic, probably, Istanbul was the hardest place in terms of establishing the new symbols of the Republic since it was the capital of three empires in history. Taksim Square Monument was the third work of Canonica in Turkey and its budget was supplied by the citizens of Istanbul through donations. On April 17, 1925, few weeks after the first news of erecting a monument of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Taksim was heard, Hamit Bey (the major of Pera Municipality) organized a press conference to inform the citizens of the details of the monument project. It is understood from this press conference that the municipality was asking for help from the Ministry for a German sculptor. However, in the end, not a German but an Italian sculptor was chosen for the task. It is not even fully clear why Canonica was chosen by the Ministry although of course his past carrier was effective in this choice: he was experienced in erecting leaders’ monuments with classical understanding in various countries as it has been mentioned earlier. In a sense, it was probably thought that Canonica could be inspired by the classical Turkish art in shaping Cumhuriyet Monument.¹⁷ The Turkish Neoclassical understanding in arts (also named as “Ankara Style”) had emerged in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and changed its phase during the early Republican era.¹⁸ Canonica probably found it prudent to adjust his style to this understanding and thus, he erected Taksim Cumhuriyet Monument by applying the classical Turkish architectural motifs. During that time, Canonica followed the artistic approach (Neo-Renaissance Style) of another Italian architecture Giulio Mongeri (1873-1953) who had stayed in Turkey and built many buildings around the country. As Cenk Berkant states in his essay on Mongeri, “...in Turkey he erected many of his buildings with the understanding of hybridization of European Neo-

¹⁷ Eyice, age, p.10

¹⁸ In the history of Turkish arts, the time span between 1908 - 1930 is considered as the neoclassical period. During this period, Turkish sculptures and architects inspired from the religious and classical structures of the previous times in their attempts to construct a national artistic understanding. For more information see Metin And. “Atatürk and Arts,” in ed. Jacob M. Landau, *Atatürk and the Modernization of Turkey*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1984.

Renaissance style in civilian architecture and 1st Turkish National Architectural Movement.”¹⁹ Taksim Square monument, in principle, was planned as a square fountain, coping the times popular ritual that could be seen among the major European capitals or prominent cities. Two faces of the main pedestal of the monument were made of pink stone and moulded in the Turkish arch style. Inside these deeply carved niches of both arches, there are two different groups of figures made of bronze: the north face of these arches shows Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in giving the orders of Büyük Taarruz in August 30, 1922. In the southern arch of the monument, Mustafa Kemal (in civilian attire) is declaring the foundation of the new Republic with his pioneer friends İsmet İnönü, Fevzi Çakmak and behind them stand the army and the people. At the narrow surfaces there are two-pointed arch niches. On these surfaces, under the soldier figures, two circular marble fountains are attached with their basins. With this fountain, the monument becomes the harmonious combination of the European and Turkish classical styles in architecture.

In August 9, 1928 “Cumhuriyet Monument” (Republican Monument) in Taksim Square was inaugurated by General Kazım Özalp and right after the opening ceremony, telegram messages were exchanged between Atatürk and Mussolini.²⁰

Considering the political tension between Italy and Turkey at that time, the second reason for choosing Canonica might be that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was willing to open up new negotiation channels with Mussolini’s Italy.²¹ One can consider the below quotation as a proof for this kind of negotiation attempt and it is taken from an interview with Canonica which appeared in *Milliyet* in October 22, 1926:²²

I have not seen Mustafa Kemal yet. But I see today a conqueror’s face, deep powerful eyes; Gazi. When I was in Rome Senior Mussolini accepted me in his office and stated that “you are going to Turkey to sculpt a statue of a great man. I wish you success in your task. This honor is not only for you but also for Italy and I hope, this might be a means to provide honesty in relations of Turkey and Italy. (Milliyet, October 23, 1926)²³

Canonica visited Turkey several months after Turkey signed a declaration of friendship with France in 1926, which Mussolini viewed as the Turkish side’s attempt to develop a closer relationship with the French.²⁴ There are various political and strategic reasons behind the Mussolini’s manoeuvre in terms of Turkey but as this paper focuses more on Canonica’s works and legacy in Turkey, this information will suffice. Seeing that Turkey shifted its scope to France and Britain, Mussolini started seeking a closer relationship with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who responded to this in a positive manner that indicates Turkey’s desire to remain friendly. Therefore, to reinforce this reciprocal political desire, both countries welcomed

¹⁹Cenk Berkant. “İzmir’deki İtalyan Projeci: Stefano Molli (1858-1916) ve Giulio Mongeri (1873-1953).” *Ege Mimarlık Dergisi*, Nisan 2015. p. 52

²⁰ For the details of these telegrams between Atatürk and Mussolini after the erection of the Takism Cumhuriyet Monument, see the newspaper *Hakimiyet-i Milliye*, August 10, 1928, number 2545. The following translation is taken from Mussolini’s letter: “To the President of Republic of Turkey Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk; in this very honourable time for the Republic of Turkey right after the erection of Republican Monument, I express my sincere gratitude to you. This art of work, which honours the new regime of the Republic of Turkey, by the Italian sculpture, now reinforces the friendship between the two countries” [My Translation].

²¹ Gür, age, p. 116

²² Although the interview was taken place in this daily newspaper, there might be lack of mistranslation of Canonica’s words since we learn from the text that Canonica gave this interview in English.

²³ “Heykel Açılışı,” *Milliyet*, 23 October, 1926.

²⁴ Dilek Barlas. “Friends or Foes? Diplomatic Relations between Italy and Turkey: 1923-1936.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol.36, 2004. p.231-252

Canonica. As it was mentioned before, we do not have any evidence that Canonica was a direct negotiator between Atatürk and Mussolini. However, one can be aware the fact that both countries looked for opportunities to improve their relationship between 1924 and 1933. These were also the years Canonica sculpted his four statues in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir. The argument that the Turkish Republic picked Canonica not because of his skills as a sculptor but because he served as a mediator between the two leaders is out of the scope of this paper and this kind of political discussion needs another ground. When it is focused on the subject matter, namely Canonica's works in Turkey, it is worth to follow his opinions in *Milliyet* newspaper of the time when Canonica was invited to Ankara by Atatürk:

I will look at him carefully while walking, sitting, and talking: in sum, I will observe him in as far as his physical movements and situation...I will observe Gazi particularly on horseback. It is the most important issue to observe a conqueror on a horse. Thus, I pay attention to this.²⁵

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk allowed Canonica to work on a sculpture in which he imaged Atatürk on horseback and this statue was put up in front of the Türk Ocağı building in Ankara. The statue's mold of the horse figure is the same one that Canonica used to sculpt the horses on the statue of King Faysal, Simon Bolivar and Alexander II. This common point in Canonica's horseback figures made some critics to put forward the assumption that Canonica did not aim aesthetic effects in his works but just political.²⁶

As mentioned earlier, the last monument of Canonica was erected in İzmir. The expenses of this monument were financed by a Levantine merchant and its creation took so long that the monument could be inaugurated by İsmet İnönü and Dr. Behçet Öz in 1932. The pedestal of the monument was made from coral face stone in modern style and at the single side of this pedestal there engraved the following words in bronze letters: "Ordular İlk Hedefiniz Akdenizdir, İleri!" Başkumandan Gazi Mustafa Kemal, Eylül 1922. The monument on this pedestal shows Mustafa Kemal on horseback and it was also made of bronze like the other monuments of Canonica in Turkey. The commander in chief is shown in his military uniform like the ones in Ankara. With his left hand the figure holds the bridle and his right-hand index finger points at the Aegean Sea. The three-sided bronze embossed pedestal of this monument also reflects the efforts of the Turkish soldiers, peasants and women during the War of Independence. The dominant figure in the pedestal is a Turkish woman with a flag post in her hand who lunges forward among the other figures.

As a prolific and fertile artist, Canonica not only worked in Turkey and Italy but also received works in different countries: among those are Fuad I of Egypt's monument (1926) in Alexandria, Ismail the Magnificent (Ismail Pasha)'s bronze monument (1929), Ibn Saud's bronze monument (1932), Faisal I of Iraq's horseback monument in Baghdad (1933), South American hero Simon Bolivar's horseback monument (1934), Argentinean President Jose Figueroa Alcorta's monument in Buenos Aires (1935), and Romanian dictator Ion Antonescu's monument (1934).

As one of the most prolific artists of his time, Canonica was appointed as a life senator (per avere illustrato la Patria con altissimi meriti nel campo dell arte) by the Italian president Luigi Einaudi for his service to Italy with his abundant art works. Some of his masterpieces have been exhibited in Canonica Museum in Rome. Among those, the works in Turkey constitutes an important place. Because of the fact that Canonica's style is classical, he did not

²⁵ *Milliyet*, age, 23

²⁶ See Fuat Gür for such assumptions.

employ the recent modernist styles in his sculpting techniques. For this reason, he tried to understand the citizens' thoughts and emotions concerning the figures he worked on and created the idealized figures which would remain honoured in their memories. His three works in Turkey constituted the first step for the development of the art of sculpting in Turkey. Canonica's techniques can be criticized according to recent understanding but one might not forget the fact that he was one of the leading figures who contributed significantly to the development of the arts in Turkey.

3. Conclusion

As above-mentioned, Canonica kept a diary and wrote down his observations and experiences during his stay in and around Turkey. His observations and descriptions of that period were different from those of a journalist or diplomat. Firstly, he was in Istanbul and then his itinerary in Turkey was Ankara, Kayseri, Amasya, Sivas, Samsun, and İzmir. Even we do not have a clear proof in his accounts that he travelled all around these places either voluntarily or by official duty, one might see his detailed ideas concerning the regions he visited. In his memories, Canonica prefers to see Turkey through constants comparisons with Italy and writes his subjective comments that emerge as a result of these comparisons. He begins his memories by emphasizing his indifference to the monument sculpting competition for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and he continues to assert that he does not intend to participate in this competition but his colleagues in the arts academy recommended him to Italian Foreign Department for this task. The opportunity of personal contact that he had with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk made the content of his account different from those of the other travellers of the time. As Canonica states, Atatürk is not an unreachable leader but a protector of the national arts. One of the first features of Atatürk that Canonica observed was his own mother and Zübeyde Hanım, who had died not a long time ago. He writes,

One day later, I came back to prepare the mould for the horseback monument. When I saw the large picture of a lady hanging on the wall, whose facial expressions reminded me very much of my passed away mother, I was drinking coffee and cigarettes with him [Mustafa Kemal] and his friends. Noticing that I could not keep my eyes off the picture, he said "she is my mother". Then I responded, "I was looking just because she reminded me of my mother". For a while he stayed in a tranquil and mindful mood and then he said, "she was my best friend, when I lost her, I lost everything."²⁷

In the above quotation, it can be seen that between the lines that both Mustafa Kemal and Canonica have a sincere talk with each other putting aside the cultural, political, and hierarchal issues. Atatürk puts into words his thoughts about women and his marriage: "Maybe you know, I was married; perhaps marriage was not for me, but if a man has a position in politics, it is hard to meet a woman who can understand the precision and fragility of her own position with her husband. My wife could not understand this fact; therefore, I had to divorce."²⁸ Not only did Mustafa Kemal Atatürk share his private life with Canonica but also his political agenda. Canonica records their interaction: "We were frequently talking with Kemal Paşa about his agenda. One day he said to me, 'we do know nothing but we have the desire to learn;

²⁷ Pietro Canonica, *Ricordi Della Mia Vita*, der. M.A. Riggio Canonica, Museo Archivio Canonica, Duplicato della copia data della Sg. Ra. M.A. Canonica a Nicoletta Carofano per lo studio del catalogo generale, Roma. (Basılmamış Hatırat). 28/2/2018. p. 125.

²⁸ Age, p. 125.

we want the specialists and experts to come here. As long as they teach us something, it is not important where they come from.”²⁹

Canonica mentions in his account that Mustafa Kemal Paşa asks him if he knows an Italian agricultural engineer who would be willing to come to Ankara. Canonica writes down some parts of their conversations as follows:

One day he asked me if I know a professor of agriculture back in Italy for the agricultural school he plans to establish. While we were talking, he said that “we Turks had plundered for centuries. Now we must learn to establish and work in every field of agriculture and industry.”³⁰

Memory is so tricky that it perpetually manipulates, changes, transforms, and transfers past experiences. How many of these words are directly quoted from Atatürk or if Canonica had paraphrased his ideas is unknowable since we do not have any clear proof for this. One might infer from the above quotation that as a military and political leader (as he stands still in front of an Italian artist for his first statue), it is ironic that he constantly talks about his own weaknesses, difficulties and hardships in his political and private life.

Canonica also met İsmet İnönü in order to sculpt his statue. From his notes, it is understood that he was influenced by İnönü and enjoyed his company more. For Canonica, İnönü’s hardship of hearing was an obstacle in the communication:

He [İnönü] was interested in social matters, literature, music, and arts. He was very modest in learning and very skillful in developing a counter argument for the discussions. You could discuss every subject with him wholeheartedly. He had a very honest and friendly attitude. He was one of the most influential persons in my life who inspired me much. Unfortunately, his hardship in hearing was making the communication difficult.³¹

Travellers have always a tendency to observe during their travels by comparing with their homelands and Canonica, partially a traveller, was not an exception. His comparisons between Italy and Turkey were not strictly differentiated as black and white. Instead, he creates a kind of grey buffer zone in his writings. Although this zone is sometimes eclipsed by sharp tones, it is clear that he honestly attempts to comprehend this foreign land (Turkey). According to Canonica, Turkey resembles much to Southern Italy in a wilder way. Of course, initially he refers to the geography employing such an adjective as “wild” but he also uses this for human beings. He writes that “most of the places here resembles to Southern Italy but there [in Turkey] everything is more monumental, eternal and wilder. One of the reasons is that it is less settled.”³² With this statement Canonica seems to situate Turkey somewhere in his hierarchical thought map. In the above comparison the crucial point is that he seems to create a “connected othering chain” and then idealizes this by associating it with Southern Italy and Turkey. Firstly, he otherizes Southern Italy and then he defines another wilder ‘other’ (in his case Turkey) which resembles the former one as he correlates the two regions. In most of his text he constantly associates or distances as a narrative strategy. But this kind of narrative staging and hierarchy scatters in one point in the text: the resemblances between the two countries were diversified reaching out from Southern Italy to the north, Turin and Venice.

²⁹ Age, p. 125-126

³⁰ Age, p. 126

³¹ Age, p.127

³² Age, p.128

For instance, in Kayseri he remembers the French romantic painter Gustave Dore's sketches and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. While he was looking at the panorama of Kayseri castle, he seemed to imagine Richard the Lionheart and the Crusaders' attacking the castle. In the following excerpt from his memoir, it is understood that Canonica was influenced by the Medieval Crusades:

Ceserea, Kayseri with its recent name, is still like in the sketches of Dore. The well-protected fortification walls indeed take us back to the time of Richard the Lionheart and one can imagine that the Crusaders are penetrating the castle. The position of the castle is well-constructed and, with its back leaning on the skirts of the mountain, it resembles the one in Turin. In fact, the snowy mountains also resemble to Monviso.³³

After Kayseri the next stop for Canonica was Amasya. The narrow streets and the small shops of this town makes him remember Venice. He thinks that many things came to Venice from Turkey.³⁴ When his car was broken down near Sivas, Canonica and his company were offered help from a nearby village where the villagers served them "pide" (pitta) bread. Canonica called this pitta bread as *focaccia* and defines it as a "badly cooked bread in the East."³⁵ Like in the previous examples of nature and panorama descriptions, he describes the foods in the same manner of comparing them with the ones in Italy. Like Amasya, Samsun was also evoked Venice in the imagination of Canonica. In the following pages he begins the question the Westernization policy in this town.

Canonica attributes his opinions to Atatürk by bringing a discourse of conservative cultural policy to Turkish circumstances where one can come across throughout the many parts of the world and can be summarised as cultural continuity and formula of fluctuation. In his observations in general, the artist thinks that it is more accurate to modernize the country without diminishing the traditional aesthetic values of the society. Canonica's observations concerning the country is descriptive and, as a sculptor, he had the chance of getting in touch with the politics of Turkey. Except the lines where he writes that Turkey is the wilder version of Southern Italy, the text does not contain racial connotations. It seems that he largely internalised the perspective of the ruling class (also his boss) rather than that of the folk. According to him, the folk is illiterate and Kemalists are a group of ruling elite who take their legitimacy from the reforms that they undertook.

³³ Age, p.128

³⁴ Age, p.128

³⁵ Age, p.130

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Figures:

Figure 1:



Wikimedia Commons Contributors, "File Pietro Canonica, dopo il voto, 1898, jpg. Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository, 28 November 2016,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Pietro_canonica,_dopo_il_voto,_1898.jpg&oldid=222426762 [accessed 29 December 2017]

Figure 2:



Monument to Tommaso Vallauri in Turin cemetery.

http://www.museocanonica.it/en/percorsi/sale_espositive/sala_vii/monumento_a_tommaso_vallauri [accessed 29 December 2017]

Figure 3:



Figure 4:



<http://www.kentyasam.com/anitin-heykeltirasindan-ataturk-ile-ilgili-anilar-yhbrdy-2448.html> [accessed 26 June 2018]

Figure 5:



https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mare%C5%9Fal_Atat%C3%BCrk_An%C4%B1t%C4%B1 [accessed 26 June 2018]