

PINOCCHIO WAS BORN IN TURKEY

Posted on August 16, 2015 by Keghart



Category: [Opinions](#)



By Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto, 15 August 2015

The Turks are a sufficiently intelligent people, and cannot help feeling the superiority of strangers.—J.L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in the Russian and Turkish Empires* (1839).

These days the news from Turkey is like the headlines from "The Onion" satiric website or the cover lines of "MAD" magazine. Another day and another side-splitting nonsense from Mister Erdogan...the man who can start a fight in an empty room.

The latest breaking news from Erdo's \$600-million presidential palace is that the Ottomans were the first to walk on the moon--300 years before Neil Armstrong. A few days later his soporific yes man at Turkish Fantasy Inc., Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, promised Turkey would bring back "Ottoman order and justice to the world". Yes, your eyes aren't playing games. The world can hardly wait for seraglios, harems, janissaries, mad and fratricidal sultans, yataghans, female genital mutilation, eunuchs, racism, oppression, gavoor, head tax, obese pashas, the destruction of peaceful societies, grass will not grow where the Ottomans have treaded boasts.

Erdogan, the man with the face of the prison guard in *Midnight Express*, came up with the recondite news about the Turkish landing on the luminous big cheese while hosting *iftar*—(Muslim feast breakfast) of the Turkish Green Crescent. Here's Erdogan's hilarious announcement verbatim. "It is alleged that the first man to walk on the moon was Neil Armstrong in 1969. I fact, Muslim space explorers reached our satellite 334 years before that, in 1635. Everyone knows the story of the famous aviator, Lagari Hasan Celebi, the 'Ottoman Rocket Man', who made the first successful manned rocket flight in 1633. What you might not know, is that he attempted to reach the moon, two years later, and could very well have succeeded."

It all makes sense: the crescent is on the Turkish flag. Turks have uncontested first rights to the moonscape. Trespassers will be prosecuted.

Before exposing the Erdogan's orotund fantasy, it's only fair to mention that while there was a Lagari Hasan Celebi in the 17th century, but his real name was Mohammed Zilli. He was an Arab merchant and traveler. He built a 7-winged rocket and jumped into the air from a tower, just below the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul. There are no reports whether he was equipped with an oxygen tank. Before the jump, he sent a message to the sultan saying: "I am going to talk to Jesus." After he had done his 200-meter Superman stunt, gravity conspired against him and the kinetically-charged caped crusader got royally soaked in the Bosphorus. That little mishap didn't discourage the indomitable Zilli. He wrote to the sultan about his celestial expedition and said: "O my Sultan! Jesus sends his regards to you." This is all that's known about the Ottoman Lunar Mission—or should we say, lunatic mission?

Braggart Erdogan doesn't mind if his phantom tales don't have a factual pedigree. The lout has

always been unencumbered by facts. Turkey's premier snake-oil salesman continued his Don Quixote narrative by peevishly adding: "NASA may have destroyed most of the physical evidence of the Ottoman success during the Apollo II mission, but we'll try to find evidence that might have escaped the cover up." Those damn Yanks should never be underestimated.

Those who follow the mental effusions of prolix Erdogan might recall that a few months ago he also regaled us with the implausible story that Turks had discovered America hundreds of years before Columbus sighted what's now Santo Domingo.

While it's easy to mock demented Erdogan, one should consider that his ravings of Turkish glory have been symptomatic of Turkish culture since Mustafa Kemal compassionately adopted the whole Turkish nation. After being shellacked by the Europeans for their backwardness and violence, and after being dismissed as the "Sick Man of Europe", Turkey, under Ataturk, willfully donned a ridiculous superiority complex which is as far from reality as the moon is from the Earth: the Ottomans were the longest-lasting empire; the Ottoman era was a time of glorious civilization; tolerance, culture and prosperity were the bywords of the empire; happy is the man who calls himself a Turk; all human civilizations spring from Turkic civilization...

Just a month before Erdo made his recent *pronucimento*, 'Daily Sabah', a leading Turkish daily, published an article titled "Turkey: a Land of Innovations and Firsts".

Here are the boiler-plate boasts:

1. Mount Ararat.

Although Turks have changed the name of the Armenian mountain, in the English-language article, the editors called it by its proper Armenian name since foreign readers wouldn't associate Noah's Ark with something called Agri Dagh.

2. The first coins were minted in Turkey.

The first coins were minted in Lydia (occupied by Turkey in 1390) in 7th century B.C. Lydia was a neo-Hittite kingdom which might make it a distant cousin of Armenia.

3. The first permanent retail shop was established in Manisa, Turkey.

See number 2.

4. Turkey played a pivotal role in the development of the Christian Council of Nicaea.

Obviously Turks—who were in Central Asia milking yaks then—through remote control dictated the Nicene Creed (a pillar of Christian faith) to Christian holy fathers attending the ecumenical gathering in 325. Nicaea vanished long ago to become Turkish Iznik.

The editor of the 'Daily Sabah' inexplicably missed the opportunity to boast that Santa Claus (St. Nicholas) was a Turk because he was based on the martyred Bishop of Myra (now called Dimre by Turks).

5. The Seven Churches of Revelation are in Turkey.

This is how it works in Turkish historic lore: You conquer a Christian country; kill/persecute its natives; destroy their churches and then claim those churches as part of your civilization. Also change the names of the cities where the churches were located. Ephesus becomes Efes, Smyrna is Izmir, Thyatira is Akhisar, Pergamum is Alasehir...

6. The first robot was made by a Turk (1136).

Consistent with another hallowed Turkish tradition, foreigners are turkified willy-nilly. According to Arab historians, Al-Jazzari (1136 to 1206), aka Al Shaykh al Amal Abu al-'izz Ibn al Jazzar (born in Mesopotamia), did research on simulators and robotics. He didn't invent the robot. He also was Arab.

7. The first ever military marching band was formed in Turkey.

Not counting the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks... the Romans had military bands millennia before Turkic barbarians ravaged the Middle East. Besides, a military marching band must have been redundant to soldiers who eagerly burned and razed everything from Iran to the Balkans and points south.

8. The first smallpox vaccination was invented in Turkey in the 17th century.

For centuries, it was known that people who survived smallpox became immune to it. For that reason, nearly every culture tried to induce immunity in healthy individuals. At least millennia before the birth of Christ, the Chinese were using tubes to insert powdered smallpox scabs through their nostrils. There is similar citing in ancient Indian texts.

9. Gazi Yasargil of Lice developed microsurgery.

Yasargil lives in the U.S.. He worked with US surgeons to develop certain methods of microsurgery. This is the only instance where the Turkish newspaper's claim comes close to a semblance of the truth.

10. "There is perhaps nowhere in the world a country which houses so many religions in such harmonious manner."

The 'perhaps' is a nice touch. No doubt the Christians, the Jews, the Yezidis, not to mention the Alevis, would have something to say about the boast.

11. Jews fleeing Spain's Inquisition found sanctuary in the Ottoman Empire and during the Nazi era Turkish diplomats saved the lives of Jews.

The sultan (not his subjects) welcomed the Iberian Jews because he rightly believed they would be good for Ottoman trade. Within a century, many of the descendants of these Jews converted to Islam ("Donmeh") because of Turkish persecution.

The few hundred Jews, who were rescued from the Nazis by Turkish diplomats who gave them Turkish passports, had to "donate" money to fatten the wallets of the "heroic" diplomats.

12. The first female combat pilot was the Turkish Sabiha Gokcen.

Sabiha Gokcen was Hripsime Sebilciyan, Turkified Armenian orphan who had survived the Armenian Genocide. In later years she visited her four brothers (Sarkis, Boghos, Khachig, and Hovhannes) in Beirut.

A major reason journalist Hrant Dink was assassinated by Turkish nationalists was because he revealed the identity of the "Turkish" pilot.

One suspects the editor of 'Daily Sabah' is a graduate of the Dogu Perincek Academy of Truth in Journalism.

