

Turkish Area Studies *Review*

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TASG

Spring Symposium 2013

and

Annual General Meeting

St Antony's College, Oxford

Saturday 27 April 2013

10.00 am to 4.30 pm

Details enclosed. Please act now!

The Website

The website address: www.tasg.org.uk

The email attached to it: info@tasg.org.uk



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Please note: Opinions expressed and stances taken are exclusively those of the contributors themselves.

Editorial

Turkey faces challenges internally and beyond its borders. Despite moves towards accommodation, the long-standing Kurdish problem becomes still more complex with the emergence of a Kurdish entity next door in strife-torn Syria – in addition to the Kurdistan which is consolidating its autonomy in northern Iraq. Prime Minister Erdoğan's AK Party maintains its vote support among Turks but there are continuing strains between supporters of the country's current direction and those who want to keep to Turkey's secular path. The imprisonment of military figures and journalists persuades many in Europe that the country still does not meet EU entry requirements. Yet outsiders also admire Turkey's strong economic progress and its growing standing in the Middle East – except, notably in the cases of Israel where long-time cooperation has turned into acrimony and in Syria convulsed as it is with internal conflict for more than two years. However in post-occupation Iraq, by contrast, Turkish firms gain lucrative contracts and expanded trade. Yet in Cyprus Turkey continues necessarily to be involved but without signs of any settlement of the enduring division of the island. Indeed Cyprus now adds serious economic problems to its political divisions.

Several of these developments figure in this issue of our *Review*. For instance TASG secured Alon Liel (sometime Israel's Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey) to deliver 'The 2013 John Martin Lecture' on the topic of Turkish-Israeli Relations, which was also attended by HE the Turkish Ambassador. It was an experience to see these two people interact, very diplomatically. But we also offer our customary coverage of literary and cultural topics and we reflect the renewed interest in Turkey's Ottoman past. Once again we are indebted to regular and occasional contributors. We have updates on political and related matters by Gamon McLellan and Clement Dodd, while Ayşe Furlonger and Arın Bayraktaroğlu report on significant events and new books. It is good to see Belma Ötüş-Baskett – the founding editor of this *Review* – among our contributors and we are especially pleased to include this time an address by Andrew Mango on the occasion of his accepting another of the many awards which Turks have given him.

We depend on offers of contributions on the whole range of aspects of the study of Turkey. Please consider submitting something to us – an article, a review of a book or a meeting, a personal reflection, or an original poem. Or write to the Co-Editors! Special welcome awaits anything relating to the ninetieth anniversary of the Turkish Republic which we will mark in our next issue – No 22. Indeed we need suggestions for a design/image for the front and back covers for that issue. With the support of our newly appointed Public Relations Officer Natalie Martin and our Events Coordinator Rezan Muir the request for contributions should reach more people in some way committed to Turkey and the Turkish world.

Brian Beeley
Co-Editor

Sigrid-B Martin
Co-Editor

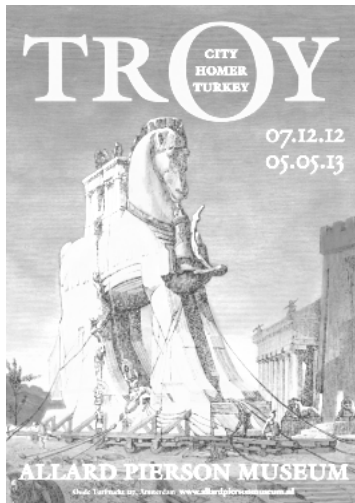
Noteworthy Events

by Ayşe Furlonger

EXHIBITIONS

Troy. City, Homer and Turkey

Allard Pierson Museum, Oude Turfmarkt 127, Amsterdam, Holland
7 December 2012 – 5 May 2013; Website: www.allardpiersonmuseum.nl



From 7 December 2012 to 5 May 2013 Allard Pierson Museum – the archaeology museum of the University of Amsterdam – is presenting the exhibition *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey* which recounts the stories of Troy and reveals Troy's many characteristics.

The exhibition presents a historical reflection of the city from various points of view; from the city itself, from the poet Homer and from different cultures and countries. The many myths that developed about Troy over time are displayed through more than 300 artefacts on loan from within the country and abroad. The sensational excavations by Heinrich Schliemann and his successors with the aid of copies of the famous Priam's Treasure; the excavation permit issued to Schliemann; original finds from various digs; a selection of items from the Ottoman archives, including photographs of Atatürk at Troy and the large marble head of Zeus from the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul are the highlights. The history of Troy by various cultures and Turkish culture during the 19th and 20th centuries also forms a major part of the exhibition.

Skill of the Hand, Delight of the Eye

Sadberk Hanım Museum, Büyükdere Piyasa Cad. No: 27- 29 Sarıyer, Istanbul , Turkey
7 December 2012 – 26 May 2013; Website: www.sadberkhanimmuzesi.org.tr

Since 1980, the Sadberk Hanım Museum has been collecting the best examples of Ottoman period embroideries, creating a collection of exceptional diversity and breadth. Curated by Hülya Bilgi and İdil Zambak, the 'Skill of the Hand Delight of the Eye' exhibition, accompanied by a lavishly illustrated exhibition catalogue, includes 167 textiles of different types worked in a wide range of needlework techniques that illustrate the richness and diversity of the embroideries that were such an essential part of Ottoman life. Through these selected pieces, visitors to the exhibition will gain insight into the story of Ottoman embroidery over a period of over 300 years, between the 17th and early 20th centuries.

The Sadberk Hanım Museum is a private museum located at the beautiful Azaryan Mansion on the Bosphorus in the Büyükdere neighbourhood of Sarıyer district in Istanbul. It was established by the Vehbi Koç Foundation in memory of Vehbi Koç's deceased wife Sadberk and houses more than 18.000 artefacts in its

collection, from archaeological relics belonging to Anatolian civilisations from the 6th millennium B.C. till the end of the Byzantine period, plus Ottoman Islamic artefacts.

The Büyükdere district itself is one of the prettiest neighbourhoods of Istanbul on the seafront with tea gardens, delightful restaurants, a mosque, three Armenian churches, one Greek church, and a wonderful view of passing ferries and of locals fishing from the promenade.

Cairo to Constantinople – Early Photographs of the Middle East

The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Canongate, The Royal Mile, EH8 8DX;
8 March 2013 – 21 July 2013

Later on: The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace - October 2014 – February 2015

In 1862, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) was sent on an educational tour of the Middle East, accompanied by the British photographer Francis Bedford (1815-94). An exhibition at The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, documents this journey through the work of Bedford, the first photographer to join a royal tour. It explores the cultural and political significance Victorian Britain attached to the region, which was then as complex and contested as it remains today.

The Prince's four-month tour had been planned by his parents, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, to occupy him after he had finished university and before he married. The tour included Egypt, Palestine and the Holy Land, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Greece. Francis Bedford, a successful commercial photographer, was commissioned by the Queen to record her son's tour. With the art of photography still in its infancy, Bedford's photographs caused a tremendous stir when they were exhibited on his return.

The tour was completed with a week-long stay on the Bosphorus, in Constantinople, where the Prince met Abdülaziz, the Ottoman Emperor. The exhibition also includes archaeological material brought back to Britain by the Prince of Wales from the excavations he had visited during his tour.

LECTURES

The Enemy Within: Rome's Frontier with Isauria between Konya and the Taurus Mountains – Professor Stephen Mitchell FBA

The Wolfson Auditorium, British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London; 9 May 2013 – 6:30pm
Contact: Claire McCafferty at biaa@britac.ac.uk or 020 7969 5204

Professor Stephen Mitchell FBA, author of *Anatolia: Land, Men and Gods in Asia Minor, A History of the Later Roman Empire AD 284-641*, and, most recently, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Ankara* gives a lecture presented by the British Institute at Ankara.

Changing Historical Perceptions in Turkey: The Case of Sultan Abdülhamid II – Serkan Yazıcı, Sakarya University

SOAS, Room 116, College Buildings, Thornhaugh St, Russell Square, London
22 March 2013: 12:00 noon

The Sultan's Organ - An Anglo-Turkish Society event

Yunus Emre Centre, 10 Maple Street, London, W1T 5HA; 29 May 2013: 18:30
PlaceWebsite: www.angloturkishsociety.org.uk

A talk by John Mole on his latest book dealing with the early stages of *Anglo-Turkish diplomatic history*

MUSIC

Between Worlds: Şirin Pancaroğlu Harp Recital

Hall One, Kings Place, 90 York Way, London, N1 9AG; 3 April 2013: 7:30pm
Website: www.kingsplace.co.uk; Tickets: Free subject to reservation

Join Turkish harpist Şirin Pancaroğlu, praised by the Washington Post as a “major talent of international calibre” as she celebrates her 35th year of performing on the harp. Şirin Pancaroğlu started harp in İstanbul. She grew up in Turkey, Switzerland, Indonesia, and the US. She studied harp at the Geneva Conservatory with Catherine Eisenhoffer and received her Diploma in 1988 and completed her formal education studying with Susann McDonald at the Indiana University School of Music where she received a Master of Music degree in 1992.



For Şirin Pancaroğlu, discovering a variety of musical identities for the harp is a central endeavour. Trained as a classical musician, Turkey's leading harpist is equally active in the realms of Turkish traditional music, improvisation, electronic music, tango and semi-staged performances as she is in mainstream harp repertoire, to which she contributes with new works commissioned for her.

Pancaroğlu has been touring with various collaborative projects since 2010. Ever since her return to İstanbul, she has been in search of her roots, connecting them with sophisticated taste to her worldly ideas, a glimpse of which she promises to share in this aptly-titled solo programme which includes *Fantasia que contrahaze la harpa en la manera de Ludovico* by Mudarra, *Rehavi Saz Semaisi* by Derviş Mustafa, *Suite for harp, Op. 83* by Britten, *Epilogo* by Granados, *Asturias* by Albéniz, *Seven Images of Istanbul* (2009) UK premiere by Barış Perker, *Blue Moon Gray*, *Yellow Night Wall* (1999) UK premiere by Hasan Uçarsu, Improvisation ‘*The Oak Tree*’ (Inspired by the 500 year old oak tree ‘Contessa’ which clads Hall One), *Divertissement à l'espagnole* by Caplet, *Lamentation* by Salzedo, and *Sonatine for harp, Op.30* by Tournier.

Talent Unlimited Ensemble

St James's Church, Piccadilly, London; 25 April 2013: 7pm; Website: www.talent-unlimited.com;
Tickets: Adult: Concert £20.00, Concert & Reception £35.00;
Student: Concert £8.00, Concert & Reception £23.00

Concert to be given by the Talent Unlimited Ensemble in the presence of the Turkish Ambassador H.E. Mr Ünal Çeviköz and Mrs Emel Çeviköz. List of musicians: Ayşe Deniz Gökçin: Piano; Mevlan Mecit: Violin; Emre Engin: Violin; Cansın Kara: Cello;

Nazlı Erdoğan: Viola; Opal Besli: Viola and Emre Erşahin: Double Bass. Programme includes pieces from Dvorak, Handel, Piazzolla, Pink Floyd, Rachmaninov, Sarasate, Say, Tabakov, Vieuxtemps.

THEATRE

Last Harem

Teatro di Rifredi, Via Vittorio Emanuele II, 303, 50134 Florence, Italy; Date: Ongoing

The Last Harem, a play featuring Turkish stage actress Serra Yılmaz, will celebrate its ninth year in Florence, reaching a total of 20,000 people this year. Staged at the Rifredi Theatre and directed by Angelo Savelli, Yılmaz plays a female household worker who begins to read tales from the classic Arabic folk story collection *One Thousand and One Nights*, and is accompanied on stage by Valentina Chico and Riccardo Naldini. Inspired by the stories of Turkish author Nazlı Eray, *The Last Harem* focuses on the pressures women face in daily life through the lens of a magical world.



Interview

Kaya Genç in conversation with Maureen Freely

London Review Bookshop, 14 Bury Place, London WC1A 2JL, 19 April, 2013, 7.00 pm
 Tickets from: books@lrbookshop.co.uk

Kaya Genç, one of Turkey's leading young writers, will be at the shop to talk about Turkish literature, history and politics with the translator Maureen Freely. His first novel (*L'avventura*) was published in 2008. Maureen Freely was born in Istanbul, and has translated five of Orhan Pamuk's books. She is also a novelist in her own right, and her latest book *Enlightenment* (Marion Boyars) is set in Istanbul. Freely has written of Genç: 'He is one of the most interesting Turkish writers to emerge in recent years. In his essays as well as his fiction, he converses across borders, while forging his own distinct voice and perspective and challenging dominant narratives.'



The 2012 John Martin Lecture

School of Oriental and African Studies

22 February 2013

Turkey-Israel: Is the story ending?

by Alon Liel¹
Diplomat and Writer

Turkey and Israel will 'celebrate' in March 2013 the 64th anniversary of their bilateral diplomatic relations. This long enduring link now looks shaky and breakable. The two most recent decades have been especially dramatic and now find the two nations, surrounded by the turmoil of the 'Arab Spring', hesitating if, where and how to react.



The 'Special Relationships'

The decade of 1990s was unprecedented in the history of Israeli-Turkish relations. It started with the 1991 Madrid peace conference that led to the upgrading of the Ankara-Jerusalem diplomatic link to full ambassadorial level for the first time. This was followed by the 1993 Oslo declaration of principles that broke the ice between the two countries and triggered high level visits on both sides, resulting in a series of military and economic agreements. In March 1996 both countries signed a free trade agreement, followed by a decision to grant Israel a contract to upgrade 170 Turkish battlefield tanks. The 1990s also witnessed a constant increase in Israeli tourism to Turkey and a significant growth in their mutual bilateral trade. After the horrific August 1999 earthquake in the Istanbul region, Israel was very quick with massive and effective help for survivors.

By the end of the 1990s Turkish public sympathy towards Israel reached its peak. Turkey offered Israel water from its Manavgat River and the Turkish Mediterranean beaches became the most favored tourist destination for Israelis. The two nations became closer than ever. When you entered a taxi in one of Turkey's cities during

¹ Dr Liel was Director General of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000-2001) and served as Israel's Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey during the 1980s. He is the author of several books on Turkey, including (with Can Yirik) *Turkish-Israeli Relations 1949-2010*, 2010, Global Political Trends Centre, 236 pp, (English, Hebrew, Turkish). ISBN 978-605-4233-43-4.

these good years and told the driver you were from Israel, he would immediately respond by praising your country's footballers, especially Haim Revivo – the Israeli player who became a hero leading his Turkish team, Fenerbahçe, to the national championship.

First Cracks

The first decade of the 21st century looked very different. In late 2000 the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* broke out leading to a big wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence which dismayed Turkey greatly. Two years later, in November 2002, Recep Tayip Erdoğan overwhelmingly won the Turkish elections. One year later he started describing Israeli policy towards the Palestinians as “state terrorism”. Erdoğan was deeply annoyed by the Israeli killing of the two senior Hamas leaders, Yasin and Rantisi, in March and April 2004 and loudly expressed his anger.

Things continued to go wrong: during 2004 Prime Minister Ariel Sharon rejected an Erdoğan offer to mediate between Israel and Syria; the Turkish attempt to ship water to Israel was rejected by the Israeli treasury, and large water and irrigation contracts granted to Israeli companies in south-east Turkey were cancelled. Media stories about Israeli companies granting military assistance to the Kurds in Northern Iraq led to wide Turkish protest, though these cracks partially disappeared when Israel unilaterally withdrew from the Gaza Strip in August 2005. Foreign minister Gül paid an official visit to Jerusalem in March 2005 followed by Erdoğan in May.

Turkish diplomatic mediation

In mid-February 2007 Turkey accepted the role of mediator between Israel and Syria. As a result the September 2007 Israeli aerial attack on an installation in Syria, while violating Turkish airspace, did not meaningfully harm Israeli-Turkish ties. The mediated talks surfaced in a trilateral Syrian-Israeli-Turkish statement on 18 May 2008, revealing that teams representing the three countries were negotiating on Turkish soil but these talks lasted openly only about six months.

The last week of December 2008 was a critical one for Turkish-Israeli friendship. Prime Minister Olmert had a short visit to Ankara trying to conclude the draft of the Syrian-Israeli talks. It looked to Erdoğan, and to President Assad, who was on the line from Damascus, as a productive exchange. However, only three days after the Olmert visit, on Saturday morning, 27 December 2008, Israel attacked Gaza. It was a massive attack that triggered a harsh reaction from Ankara and brought about an instant collapse of the Syrian-Israeli track. Shortly thereafter, in the Swiss city of Davos, Prime Minister Erdoğan (who expected to be notified ahead of the Israeli attack plans) rudely left a panel he had shared with Israel's President, Shimon Peres, while accusing Israel of killing children in Gaza.

The aftermath of operation ‘Cast Lead’

This ‘One minute (Davos) incident’ (as it is called in Turkey) marked the beginning of a significant political crisis between the two countries. Erdoğan launched throughout 2009 a series of verbal attacks on Israel and its policies: he suggested that Israel could be expelled from the UN and that the Israeli nuclear capabilities would be examined alongside those of Iran. Israel was not allowed to participate in an international military exercise in Turkey (to which it had been invited previously) and a TV series in Turkey's official channel (TRT) showed Israeli soldiers intentionally

killing Palestinian civilians, including children. In response the Turkish ambassador to Israel, Ahmet Oğuz Çelikkol, was summoned by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem. The meeting, on 11 January 2010, proved to be a sad and worrying event. Shortly before it started, Deputy Minister Ayalon asked photographers to be sure to show the Ambassador seated as low as possible. Indeed, immediately after the meeting, photos were published showing Ambassador Çelikkol seated lower than his Israeli host! The Israeli public understood that the ambassador was intentionally humiliated and the story obviously reached Turkey instantly. Turkey threatened to call its ambassador home if there were no official apology. It took about 24 hours for Deputy Minister Ayalon to apologize but the storm only intensified – an Israeli report quoting officials feeling as if "Turkey has learned the lesson" caused additional anger in Ankara. The Israeli-Turkish bond, so meaningful and stable during the 1990s, found itself under severe pressure.



The *Mavi Marmara* Affair

During the early morning of 31 May 2010, the worst crisis ever in bilateral Turkish-Israeli relations occurred. The Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara*, sent by the Turkish non-governmental organization IHH, and carrying over 600 pro-Palestinian activists, was raided by Israeli Defense Forces, after trying to break the siege of Gaza. Nine of the Turkish activists on board were killed and some tens were injured. Several IDF soldiers were also wounded. It was the first-ever violent incident between the two countries and as such triggered anti-Israeli demonstrations in Turkey as well as anti-Turkish protests in Israel. The Turkish ambassador to Israel was called back to Ankara, where Israel's ambassador was asked to leave. Ankara downgraded the bilateral relations to second secretary level. Turkey demanded an official apology from Jerusalem for the killing of nine of its citizens but Israel has declined to do so until this very day.

Where do we go from here?

The years 2009-2012 could be described as one of ongoing severe crisis between Turkey and Israel. The fact that most of the Turkish verbal attacks on Israel came directly, on record, from the Turkish Prime Minister, had an immediate impact on the Turkish media and public.

Will these developments inflict a mortal blow on the almost fifteen years of Israeli-Turkish alliance? To answer this question we have to find out whether the Turkish-Israeli crisis is stemming mostly from the overall eastward trend in Turkey's foreign policy, or if it is mostly a result of Ankara's objection to recent Israeli policies, especially towards the Palestinians. These two alternatives are not mutually exclusive. We can trace a movement eastwards in Turkey's foreign policy that brought Turkey much closer to the Islamic world. We can simultaneously trace a more assertive Turkish attitude to regional conflicts, especially the one inside Syria at the moment. However, this eastward trend was not itself sufficient to bring about a major crisis in relations with Israel, which never demanded exclusivity in its special relations with Turkey. Turkey, on the other hand, never intended to harm its relations with the Arab states while warming relations with Israel during the 1990s.

Erdoğan's disappointment with Israel's recent policies regarding the peace process with the Palestinians seems to be a major reason for the ongoing crisis with Israel. The derailing of the process during the past three years fueled many of Erdoğan's attacks on Israel. The Turkish Prime Minister has completely linked Turkey's bilateral relations with Israel to progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Possible changes in Ankara's policy are, for all practical purposes, in the hands of two individuals – Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. Both have developed a very hostile attitude to current Israeli policies. It does not look as if any of the opposition parties in Turkey can influence matters. The nationalist MHP is hostile to Israel and the secular CHP looks almost indifferent.

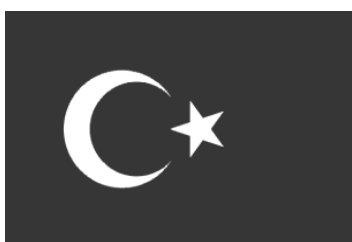
Losing Turkey's friendship could have devastating bilateral and regional effects on Israel in the long run. There is still a lot happening between the two countries economically but further deterioration could meaningfully damage the trade level between them (close to \$4 billion a year). This bilateral link is today of no less importance to Turkey. The 'Arab Spring' has spoiled many of its regional plans (especially in the rift with Syria) and Ankara's need to engage Israel in its regional energy plans has recently brought the sides to the table again. If the new Israeli government were to find a way to apologize for the *Mavi Marmara* killings, we might soon see the ambassadors back in Tel Aviv and in Ankara. But the fact that a feasible draft of an apology devised by Israeli diplomats in Geneva was over-ruled by Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman does not bode well.

In such a search for optimism, however, it is clear that the regional outlook of both governments have taken different directions in recent years. A major development in Israel has been the immigration of hundreds of thousands from Russia – most of whom see no prospect of a settlement with the Palestinians which would give anything close to the minimum which Israel might contemplate. Lieberman himself represents this perception of an Israel strong enough to maintain something like the *status quo* for the foreseeable future, which contrasts fundamentally with David Ben Gurion's 1940s hopes to see Israel as (a Jewish) part of the Middle East. Lieberman and like-minded Israelis nowadays look less to the Middle East and more to Europe – including the Balkans and southern countries, with less concern with the Palestinian factor.



For its part, Turkey, with its membership aspirations so far rebuffed by the European Union, has of late to some extent turned away from Europe and back towards its regional neighbours. It becomes an increasingly important regional power, showing Arab states a mix of Islam and secular democracy. Such realignments notwithstanding, the realities of Middle Eastern geography suggest that a close

relationship between Israel and Turkey is needed for the long term. Certainly the United States would like to see renewed harmony between two allies in an uncertain region.



Kurdish key to Turkey's political future?

Developments since October 2012 by

Gamon McLellan, SOAS, University of London

The Kurdish issue been the Turkish Republic's most intractable problem since the Şeyh Said rebellion of 1925, and, despite its appeal to Muslims across the ethnic divide, the AK Party has found this no less a challenge. There was initial optimism: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan first entered parliament as MP for Siirt, the birthplace of his wife Emine, and in the 2007 general election the ruling party won more votes in the Kurdish south east than the independents of the Kurdish national movement.² There was talk of an *açılım* – an opening or initiative towards the Kurds. There has been progress: Kurdish – the speaking of which in public had been illegal from 1983 until 1991 – started to be taught, Kurdish publications and broadcasting were permitted and the TRT-6 Kurdish TV channel was launched in 2009. Mardin's Artuklu University introduced undergraduate Kurdish Studies in autumn 2011, and Diyarbakır's Dicle (Tigris) University is starting a Masters' degree in Kurdish. In April, a Kurdish translation of Nasrettin Hoca stories will be published with government blessing.³



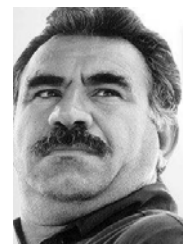
Yet PKK attacks worsened from autumn 2007, and the government backed the military in its efforts to eliminate the guerrilla organisation. Local government elections in 2009 saw the AK Party losing popularity in the south east – and the

² In the 2007 and 2011 parliamentary general elections the Kurdish candidates stood as independents, thus bypassing the need for their party to win more than 10% of votes nationwide in order to gain any seats at all. For detail on how this was achieved in 2007, see Hale, William (2008) 'The Electoral System and the 2007 Elections: Effects and Debates', *Turkish Studies*, 9: 2, pp. 242 ff.

³ 200 stories are to be published by Yerel Mevzuat Yayıncılık under the title *Pekenoken Bijarti Yen Xoce Nisredin* ("A selection of Nasrettin Hoca Stories"), according to Eylül Akdeniz of *Akşam* newspaper: <http://www.aksam.com.tr/yasam/nasrettin-hoca-kurtce-guldurecek/haber-177054>

açılım later that year was undermined when the DTP⁴ was closed and mayors in the region were taken away in handcuffs, the first stage in prosecuting alleged members of the umbrella organisation KCK (Union of Communities in Kurdistan). Kurdish demands for regional autonomy and for Kurdish to be the first official language in the region became more strident – antagonising many Turks. There was discussion of lifting the parliamentary immunity of the BDP MPs.⁵ Judges in the KCK trials in Diyarbakır in November 2010 had the microphone switched off when the defence insisted on speaking in *bilinmeyen bir dil* (an unknown language). On the eve of the 2011 election, the Prime Minister declared that Turkey no longer had a Kurdish problem – just the individual problems of its Kurdish citizens. A low point came in December 2011, when 34 young Kurds were killed in error on the Iraqi frontier by Turkish military planes who mistook them for PKK guerrillas. It became ever clearer that the PKK's armed struggle could not achieve its goals – but equally that the Turkish armed forces were unable to eliminate the illegal organisation or prevent its atrocities.

Despite all the formal condemnations, Turkish officials had been having contacts with the PKK. In February 2012, a prosecutor summoned Hakan Fidan, Head of the National Intelligence Agency MİT, to testify about contacts his organisation had had with the PKK in Oslo – contacts understood to have been authorised by the Prime Minister. It was reported during the autumn that approaches had been made to the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan on the island of İmralı, where he has been imprisoned since 1999. But nothing was officially acknowledged until 28th December 2012, when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan confirmed that there had been contacts by senior officials with Öcalan. More details were given a few days later by Yalçın Akdoğan, an adviser to the Prime Minister: officials had been to İmralı in an attempt to end the struggle between the PKK and the Turkish state, an ambition complicated by the triangular relationship between Öcalan, the PKK commanders in the mountains and the elected Kurdish politicians. Öcalan remains key to any peace process despite his isolation on İmralı – and the İmralı talks have now been dominating the news agenda since the start of 2013. Öcalan has received two delegations of elected Kurdish politicians: the first in January, the second in late February. To the government's fury, details of the February meeting appeared in *Milliyet* on 28th February. Observers noted that the Prime Minister – who last summer had defended the re-introduction of the death penalty, citing the Öcalan case as his strongest argument – was softening his language.⁶ On 24th January, he reshuffled his cabinet, replacing the outspoken Interior Minister İdris Naim Şahin with Muammer Güler, a former Governor of İstanbul. A few days earlier, the court in Diyarbakır had released 10 KCK suspects, including six mayors.



The prevailing mood has been one of cautious optimism – a feeling that there may now be a chance of defusing a struggle that has cost so many lives during the last

⁴ Demokratik Toplum Partisi (*Democratic Society Party*), the identity under which the Kurdish national movement was then represented in Turkish political life. The party was closed by the Constitutional Court in December 2009: its place was taken by the Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (BDP) (*Peace and Democracy Party*), which had been legally formed in 2008 and became active once the DTP was closed down.

⁵ This evoked memories of 1994, when such a process had been initiated by the then Prime Minister Tansu Çiller. As a result, four elected representatives, including Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle, spent the next ten years behind bars.

⁶ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haber/36652/once-insan-sonra-devlet-diyoruz>

three decades, and perhaps of creating a system which could accommodate both Kurdish aspirations and Turkish concerns for the integrity of the Republic. In early January, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) cautiously welcomed the start of talks – although on 24th January, in a hot-tempered parliamentary exchange with BDP members, Birgül Ayman Güler, the leading CHP speaker, declared: “You can't make me swallow Kurdish nationalism (*milliyetçilik*) under the guise of 'progressiveness' (*ilericilik*) and 'independence'. You can't make us regard the Turkish nation (*ulus*) as equal, as having the same value, as the Kurdish nation (*milliyet*)⁷.” This provoked uproar and precipitated the resignation from the CHP of Salih Fırat, member for Adıyaman. The remarks had been made in a debate on a bill – now law – allowing a defendant to use a mother-tongue other than Turkish in court proceedings, thus addressing a specific Kurdish grievance. And in March eight Turkish officials who had been seized by the PKK during the last two years were released in northern Iraq and returned to Turkey after a message to the PKK from Öcalan. It was facilitated by the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq. Despite great apprehension initially in Ankara at having an autonomous Kurdish zone adjacent to the Turkish frontier, the AK Party government now enjoys close links with the Iraqi Kurdish leadership. Mas'oud Barzani was a guest at last September's AK Party congress (see October 2012 newsletter). The Kurdish region in Iraq absorbs some 70 per cent of Turkey's exports to Iraq, which is now Turkey's second most important export market, and thousands of Turkish businesses are today operating in northern Iraq.⁸

But it would be unwise to conclude that the road to a solution of Turkey's Kurdish problem will be easy. Events can derail the process. In early January, three leading PKK figures were gunned down in Paris. Disillusion with the Turkish state is profound in the south east, and there is widespread anger amongst Turks at years of PKK outrages, but also at the increasing stridency of Kurdish politicians and the large Kurdish presence in western Turkey.

More cynical observers link the process with Turkey's parliamentary arithmetic. Parliament's constitutional commission has continued to make progress on drafting the new constitution, but there is still significant disagreement between the political parties. They did not achieve the 31st December deadline for completing the draft, and it seems unlikely that they will finish it by the end of March. Time is running out to get a new constitution ratified by referendum in time for the presidential election due in August 2014. AK Party rules prevent the Prime Minister standing again for the post of party leader – and do not allow him to be adopted as a parliamentary candidate for the 2015 parliamentary general election. So it is assumed he will run for president in 2014 – but he would prefer to be an executive president, and the party submitted a proposal for a presidential system to the commission. The opposition parties are unenthusiastic about a President Erdoğan with enhanced executive powers. Without the agreement of the other parties, the AK Party needs 330 votes in parliament to submit its own draft constitution to referendum: it has only 326 members. The BDP has 29. If an agreement can be struck with Öcalan, the BDP

⁷ <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1118295&CategoryID=78>
Video of Güler's speech is available at <http://webtv.hurriyet.com.tr/2/44439/0/1/birgul-ayman-guler-in-0-konusmasi.aspx>

⁸ For more information, see Dombey, Daniel and Funja Guler, 'Turkey emerges as true Iraq war victor', *Financial Times* 12th March 2013: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c038427a-8a40-11e2-bf79-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz2NN6aMCeR>

would then vote with the government, enabling the latter to proceed straight to a referendum.⁹

The ruling party is also pursuing other options for getting its 330 votes in parliament. Overtures have been made to MPs of other parties, including former CHP MP Salih Fırat who joined AK Party on 19 March. Ending thirty years of bitter conflict is not easy, and persuading four MPs from other parties to defect might be less challenging to the government than securing a quick deal with the PKK, even though Abdullah Öcalan was expected to declare a PKK ceasefire for *Nevruz* (Kurdish New Year – 21 March).

There are other reasons for urgent action to defuse Turkey's Kurdish problem. Relations with the Kurds in northern Iraq are warm – encouraged by a potential deal giving Turkey an interest in the oil and gas fields there. With possible yields from shale gas reserves in Turkey's south-east, the Kurdish region straddling Northern Iraq and south-eastern Turkey could develop into a zone of prosperity, with an open border vindicating and exemplifying Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's policy of strategic depth and zero problems with the neighbours – but only if Turkey can put an end to its own Kurdish problem. Mas'oud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan have had a history of fluctuating relations with Ankara – the organisations have had offices in Ankara since the era of Turgut Özal – but the relationship now has a solid economic basis.

The situation with Syria is very different. The possible emergence of another autonomous or independent Kurdish zone, this time in northern Syria, presents a much more serious threat. Syria's Democratic Union Party (PYD) is a far more radical organisation than either of the two Iraqi Kurdish parties. Unlike them, it is affiliated to the PKK, and Syrian Kurds have traditionally been more hostile to the Turkish state. With Syria a failed state, a hostile jihadist or Kurdish polity emerging along the Turkish-Syrian frontier could pose a very large problem with this particular neighbour. NATO-supplied Patriot defence systems were duly installed in Kahramanmaraş to provide some protection to Turkey from stray fire from across the border, but resolving the Kurdish issue in Turkey would help to reduce the threat.

The ongoing KCK trials in Diyarbakır and Istanbul, with thousands of suspects in custody accused of membership of an illegal organisation, are a major grievance. Along with other prominent trials of figures accused of involvement in various plots to overthrow the government – the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases in particular – they have provoked widespread indignation in Turkey and abroad. The length of pre-trial detention and the chaotic nature of proceedings (defence lawyers not allowed proper time to consult with the accused, not receiving details of the evidence and often not permitted to summon witnesses) have been criticised. The government's proposed new anti-terrorism legislation should narrow the definition of terrorism – this might lead to the release of many of the journalists who are on trial or imprisoned for what observers have argued is legitimate journalistic work.

On 1 February, the US embassy in Ankara was attacked by a suicide bomber who died in the explosion, which also killed a security guard. The perpetrator, Ecevit

⁹ The purported leaked account of the meeting between the PKK leader and three BDP MPs quotes Öcalan as saying "we would support Tayyip Bey" for president. *Milliyet* 28th February 2013.

Şanlı, was a member of a fringe leftist organisation DHKP-C (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front). Hundreds of suspects were detained in operations across the country – prompting scepticism that so many could have been involved with the DHKP-C.

The Ergenekon and Balyoz cases have dragged on, with General İlker Başbuğ, former Chief of Staff, completing his first year in detention in January. Attention has concentrated on the conditions in which the detainees are held, without adequate heating, sometimes without enough water, and usually without proper medical attention. Many of those held are elderly and some have chronic diseases. An MP who visited two detained MPs – the leading transplant surgeon Mehmet Haberal (detained without trial for nearly four years) and Lieutenant-General Engin Alan (detained since 2010 and now serving 18 years) – noted that there had been nil improvement in conditions in the jail since his own imprisonment during the 1980-83 period.¹⁰ In January, the Prime Minister puzzled observers by criticising the length of these detentions, and the following month he visited General Ergin Saygun in hospital. Saygun had been released from jail on medical grounds, having served part of an 18-year sentence. Yet there have been more arrests of officers involved in the 28th February 1997 process and the subsequent clamp-down on Islamists. Critics of Turkey's human rights record were not impressed by a court decision in January to reverse three previous acquittals and convict the sociologist Pınar Selek of bombing İstanbul's Egyptian bazaar in 1998. She had been conducting academic research among the Kurds and spent over two years in detention. Now she lives abroad. In January she was given life imprisonment in absentia.

There has been no sign of greater AK Party tolerance of dissent or opposition. When Erdoğan visited Ankara's Middle East Technical University in December, 2,500 police with armoured cars turned out to confront student protestors with tear gas and water cannon. Several students were injured, one seriously. The Prime Minister blamed the university authorities and teachers for raising unruly students. Similar instances of violent suppression of student dissent during Prime Ministerial visits have been seen in recent years.

Erdoğan has been speaking more frequently, sometimes making two or three speeches a day, on a very wide range of subjects. Following his advice to women in recent years to produce at least three children, he urged them in January now to have at least four or five children, expressing concern at a recent lowering of the birth rate.

And while the government is pushing to resolve the Kurdish issue, the *açılım* towards Turkey's Alevi population seems to have run into the sand. In February the Prime Minister declared bluntly that Alevilik was not a religion but a grouping within Islam. "It does not have a clear identity... The *cemevleri* are not places of worship. In Islam there is one place of worship: the mosque. The *cemevleri* are cultural centres."¹¹

¹⁰ Lütfü Türkkan said the jail was so cold that he was ill for a week after his visit, yet General Alan was allowed only one jersey at a time: *Sözcü* 17th February 2013, <http://sozcu.com.tr/2013/genel/engin-alana-kazak-yasagi.html>

¹¹ *Hürriyet* 22nd February 2013, taken from the Anatolian Agency <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/22657408.asp>. Recognition of the *cemevleri* as places of worship is one of the long-standing Alevi demands. The *cemevi* is the building where the Alevi community meets to perform the *cem* ceremony which is central to their religious observance.

Those who are concerned at increasing Islamicisation have found further evidence to stoke their anxiety. In December, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality announced that in order to make space for a building project it was removing from the main square in Kadıköy a large sculptural representation of Atatürk teaching children the new Latin alphabet. In January, the Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council (TÜBİTAK) announced it would no longer publish or sell books advocating the theory of evolution. In March, Isparta followed Afyon in banning the consumption of alcohol in public places.¹² And a plan to construct a giant neo-Ottoman mosque on the top of Çamlıca hill overlooking İstanbul has attracted fierce criticism on aesthetic as well as secularist criteria.

There has been a determined campaign to reconvert museums, former Byzantine churches which had become mosques after the Ottoman conquests, into working mosques. Two years ago, during the *Kurban Bayramı* (Feast of Sacrifice) prayers were conducted in the Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya) in İznik (Nicaea). The Ministry notice stating that it was a museum was replaced by one put up the Presidency of Religious Affairs declaring it was a mosque. In January this year it was reported that İstanbul's oldest surviving church building that of the Monastery of St. John of Stoudios (İmrahor Camii) in the Samatya district, is to reopen as a functioning mosque.¹³ Hitherto under the jurisdiction of the Ayasofya Museum, the building is to be transferred to the Directorate General of Religious Foundations. Five days later, Adnan Ertem, Director General of Religious Foundations, told journalists that the Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) in Trabzon is to re-open for Muslim worship: the building had been converted into a mosque by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror and had functioned as such until 1960. It had then been turned into a museum, he said, but without any decision by the Council of Ministers and "without our agreement". He



pointed out that the Ayasofya in İznik had reopened as a mosque in 2011. There had been some reactions, he said, but in fact there had been no drop in visitor numbers to the city. Asked about the Ayasofya in İstanbul, Ertem said that that building had been endowed by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. According to its deed of endowment "it is a mosque and will remain so for ever". He said "it is our aim" as the Directorate General of Religious Foundations to make that deed a living reality. The decision to convert the İstanbul Ayasofya into a museum (in 1935) had been taken by the Council of Ministers, he added, while that had not been the case with the buildings in Trabzon and İznik.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the acting chairman of the parliamentary commission for petitions Halil Ürün has announced that a large number of requests have been received for the İstanbul Ayasofya to be reopened to worship.¹⁵ He said that until the building was turned into a museum in 1935 it had been a mosque; it is registered as belonging to the *vakıf* of

¹² *Cumhuriyet*, 13th March 2013

¹³ Fazlı Mert in *Zaman* 22nd January 2013 <http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem/imrahor-camii-100-yil-sonra-ibadete-aciliyor/2043653.html> In recent years the building has been closed, although visitors have been able to arrange visits through the Director of Ayasofya Museum. In the seventies it was open at various periods to visitors as a museum.

¹⁴ Reported on the website of the Directorate General of Religious Foundations

<http://www.vqm.gov.tr/haberdetay.aspx?ld=78>

¹⁵ *Zaman* and *Milliyet* 14th February 2013.

Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. He maintained that *bedel* (compensation) had been paid at the time of the conquest to the Patriarchate. Ürün said he would expect objections to the proposal from the western world, but these could be rebutted by reference to the Grand Mosque in Cordoba, now a church. Greek Orthodox citizens in Turkey could be made content by opening the Aya İrini (Hagia Eirene) to Christian worship, which could provide balance, he suggested. The Oecumenical Patriarch responded that the Hagia Sophia had been founded as a church, not as a mosque, “and so we would like it to remain a museum”.¹⁶



The Prime Minister has continued to inveigh against Israel. He told a UN gathering that “it is inevitable that Islamophobia, like Zionism, anti-Semitism and fascism, be considered a crime against humanity”. The reference to Zionism provoked strong criticism. The new Secretary of State John Kerry, called the remarks “objectionable”. In February, after an Israeli attack on a convoy in Syria, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu lashed out at Bashar al Assad for bombarding his own people for 22 months but “not even chucking a pebble at the Israeli planes while they fly over his palace and insult his nation’s honour?” Davutoğlu asked: “Why can’t Assad, who gave the order to fire SCUD missiles at Aleppo, do anything against Israel?”¹⁷ It remains unclear whether Turkey regards Assad’s Syria or Netanyahu’s Israel as the greater menace in the region.

The dialogue of the aurally impaired has continued between Ankara and the European Union. The government still insists it is intent on membership – in October the Prime Minister said he expected Turkey to be a member at the latest by 1923. But he and other ministers have expressed anger at the delays: no other country has had to wait 54 years Egemen Bağış (Turkey’s chief negotiator) said in February. Unsurprisingly there is no enthusiasm now for adopting the Euro. Yet Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle stated bluntly in February that Turkey would have to join the single currency once it is accepted as a member of the Union, rejecting the Prime Minister’s suggestion of a Turkish lira zone. A similar impasse occurred later the same month during a visit by German Chancellor Angela Merkel when she reiterated that Turkey should recognise the Republic of Cyprus. In October, the annual European Commission Progress Report with its meticulous examination of Turkey’s deficiencies as a candidate provoked irritation in Ankara. The EU has traditionally expected candidate countries to behave as grateful supplicants – a role which the Turkish government is certainly not prepared to assume. Erdoğan reminded Brussels that the EU is not the only game in town: Turkey, he said, might also apply to join the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The message from Ankara is that Europe needs Turkey more than Turkey needs Europe. One voice in Brussels may agree: Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger was reported as saying on 20th February that a German Chancellor would one day come on his or her knees to implore Turkey to join the Union. But a week later the EU did agree to open talks on a new chapter in the accession progress, after France decided no longer to block this process.

¹⁶ Interviewed by Pelin Batu in *Milliyet* 18th February 2013

¹⁷ *Hürriyet* 3rd February 2013

At home, elections are looming. The AK Party was finally unable to secure sufficient support in parliament for bringing forward the local government elections to this autumn: they will be held in March 2014, and the party has already started detailed planning.¹⁸ The CHP however is much less prepared – which is ironic given that there is general agreement that its present leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who performed well as candidate for Mayor of Greater Istanbul in 2009, could have been more successful had he been nominated by the party a year or so before the vote. The CHP looks equally unprepared for August 2014, which will see the first direct election by the people of a President of the Republic: no candidate has been identified. There is little doubt about who will be the AK Party candidate: on 2nd February one of the party's deputy chairmen Süleyman Soylu declared unequivocally that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is "Turkey's eternal President in perpetuity."¹⁹



The constitution–making process in Turkey: Between law and politics

by Ece Göztepe

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Part 2

A constituted power can change the constitution within the legal limits of the constitution itself, regardless of the majority of the ruling party. However in the constitutional theory and praxis of the stable democracies of the Council of Europe there also exist non-written amendment constraints. Many international conventions, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, decisions of the bodies of the United Nations or the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Courts, have decisive influence on the meaning and substance of terms like the rule of law, democracy or the secular state. Therefore, nowadays, one cannot only consider the irrevocable provisions from a formal aspect; one must also take into consideration their connection with other constitutional principles. For example, in modern democracies the right of litigation either as plaintiff or defendant and the right to a fair trial before the courts through lawful means and procedures apply (Art. 36), the guarantee of lawful judgement (Art. 37), the principles

¹⁸ Details in *Hürriyet* 22nd February 2013

<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/22657408.asp>

¹⁹ "Tayyip Erdoğan, Türkiye'nin ilelebet ve ebedi başkanıdır" *Hürriyet* 4th February

<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/22513889.asp> Soylu is a former leader of the Demokrat Parti and joined the AK Party in September 2012

relating to offences and penalties (e.g. no one shall be considered guilty until proven guilty in a court of law) (Art. 38) is an integral part of the rule of law. So a constitutional amendment should not abolish these principles while leaving the irrevocable rules still formally in existence.

Irrevocable provisions show the main principles and aims of a political entity on which the judicial system is built. The 1982 Constitution decided on them in a very confusing way. Some of the principles lack, in fact, any objective meaning. In spite of all criticism of existing irrevocable provisions, a constituted power is logically not allowed to change or abolish these principles, because this framework is the reason why and how the constituted power exists.

The objective of existing amendment procedures is indeed to guarantee the legitimacy of constitutional change. But sometimes even irregular constitutional reform or revolutionary acts may be considered legitimate and necessary in order to introduce democratic governance - or originally unconstitutional acts can change over time²⁰. One should ask whether this is currently the case in Turkey. Constitutions are ultimately documents which demonstrate the will of a group of people who would like to live together under a certain political rule. If this group as a whole, or many of them, show an observable will to make fundamental changes in the form of the political unit, then one can speak of a revolutionary moment. Constituted power is pushed to its limits. Eastern Europe has experienced such moments since 1989. Apart from in the Balkans they were generally peaceful, non-violent demands for change by the people. The constitution-making process in South Africa also falls under this category. With regard to Turkey the question is: Are the Turkish people at such a crossroads? The last elections on 12 June 2011 took place with a national threshold of 10%. The parliament was thus formed according to the existing election rules. No special regulations to increase the representative power of the parliament (such as decrease of the national threshold from 10 to 7 or 5%; representation according to profession, etc.) were introduced. Prior to the election the parties generally spoke of a need for a so-called civil constitution but none of them submitted a comprehensive draft or made specific comments on the main aspects of a 'new and civil' constitution. The existing judicial and political order was built on the regular rules of the system. The time for a new constitution could emerge only if a Constituent Assembly were chosen through special rules and with special duties. That could have happened before the election in June 2011 if the Assembly had advocated a total revision of the constitution, but only if the election campaign had been tailored to that constitution and if the electoral system had envisaged a low or zero national threshold for parties. However this was not the case. In October 2011, an actual example of such a process could be seen in Tunisia. What emerges from the constitution-making process there is yet to be seen.

We can now evaluate the current situation in Turkey and discuss the chances of success of the so-called 'Commission for Constitutional Agreement'. On 19 September 2011, the Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Cemil Çiçek, invited professors of Constitutional Law to Ankara and discussed with them the possibilities and the limits of positive law in drafting a new constitution. In the second step a 'Commission for Constitutional Agreement' was established with three members from each of the parties currently represented in the parliament. That makes twelve members of the Commission. Irrespective of the proportion of each party in the parliament, the parties

²⁰ Report on Constitutional Amendment, Venice Commission CDL-AD (2010)001, Study No. 469/2008 (19 January 2010), Paragraph 22.

are represented equally in the Commission which was convened for the first time on 19 October 2011.

Most important are the working rules of the Commission: The catalogue of 15 rules can be viewed as a portent of the future failure of the Commission. Some of the fundamental ones include:

- The Commission decides without a dissentient vote.
- If the Commission cannot decide on a compromise, the matter is postponed.
- The decision about whether the constitution-making process is finished or the whole text of the new constitution has been completed is also subject to unanimous voting.
- The work on a new constitution should be completed by the end of 2012. The Commission is thus working under time pressure.
- The draft text of the Commission cannot be changed either by the regular Constitutional Committee or by the Parliament in plenary session without the permission of the 'Commission for Constitutional Agreement', and
- The work of the Commission ends with the approval of the constitutional amendment by the full Turkish Grand National Assembly or if one party resigns from the membership in the Commission.

In addition to these strict working principles, there are also the parties own 'central themes', based on their fundamental political views. Thus the extreme nationalistic Nationalist Action Party (NAP/MHP) has stated that if the irrevocable provisions of the current Constitution should be discussed in order to change or abolish them, it would leave the Commission. Also, the party shields itself against any proposed amendments to the definition of nationality and the basic principles of the Republic. If the Kurds were granted the right to provide education in Kurdish or the municipalities in Southeast Anatolia were granted more autonomy, the NAP would not agree to the constitution-making process. However, the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) *insists* on them! The Party claims more autonomy for municipal authorities, a conceptual change in the definition of citizenship and a decentralisation in all state responsibilities. Lastly, the social democratic party – CHP – stated only that the current irrevocable provisions form their central themes in the constitutional discussion. In contrast, for the Justice and Development Party (AKP) everything is up for discussion. But, following the words of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan the provisions of the constitution, which were introduced through the last amendment procedure in September 2010, should not be discussed. Those were *his personal* central themes. That means in fact that we are currently not discussing everything with regard to a democratic, open constitution but only what the governing party allows us to discuss!

If one looks at the central themes of the four parties, the chances of success of the current constitution-making process would seem very low, particularly since what one party is demanding is precisely the reason for another party to reject the whole process.

I assume that the parties in the Commission will eventually draft a text which will meet with much opposition or will leave many relevant questions open. In the full Parliament this text would not stand a chance of being passed, since that requires the unanimous decision of the Commission. Thus after a year and a half of intensive work, the government party is faced with the question: "Should we put the whole thing aside and mark it down to experience in trying to find a compromise, or should we revise the text

according to our wishes and take the conventional path of Art. 175 after all?" Both of these questions can be realised in practice. We have had a similar experience during the constitutional amendment process in 2010. At the beginning of 2010 the governing party said that they would like to ask other parties to find a compromise for a large scale judicial reform which was important to democratise the political system. But after criticism from the opposition parties the AKP government has given up on the promise and abandoned compromise. The wide-ranging amendments were finally decided through a referendum despite substantial criticism.

In view of the fact that it is apparently the wish of the AKP to abandon the parliamentary regime and to introduce a presidential system as in the USA, it would be perfectly possible, with the support of the Turkish people, to bring about major changes in the constitutional system through a popular referendum. But even then the question would remain as to what purpose the whole discussion on the role and limits of constituted power served? Therefore it would have been more advisable to listen to the basic desire for more freedom in society and to undertake a fundamental revision of existing constitutional provisions. Given the international roots and openness of the Turkish Constitution and the constant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the Turkish Constitutional Court, the political system can be reformed without a new constitutional movement.



Update on Cyprus 2012/13

by **Clement Dodd**

Save for one significant event there would at first sight appear to be little enough to report on the Cyprus problem over the past six months. The significant event is generally regarded to be the election on 24 February of Nicos Anastasiades as the new president by the Greek Cypriots, replacing President, Demetris Christofias, of AKEL (The Progressive Party of Workers) whose last two years as president coincided with the virtual collapse of the Greek Cypriot economy, and the consequent need for a bail-out by the European Union, a process still to continue under the new president.



Christofias was not able to achieve any results in negotiating a settlement of the Cyprus dispute in negotiations with the Turkish Cypriot President, Derviş Eroğlu, whom he found less responsive in discussions than the previous president, Mehmet Ali Talat, with whom he had rather more in common politically. In 2004 Christofias had voted against the Annan Plan drawn up by the UN after much



discussion with both sides. Anastasiades stood out in 2004 as the principal supporter of the Annan Plan that the Greek Cypriots rejected. He has since asserted that the best way forward is to have a rather weak federation composed of two states, a view that does not find much favour among the many Greek Cypriots who believe that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is not a state, since it is only recognized by Turkey.

The Hydrocarbon Issue

The election of Anastasiades, and the hope that it seems to engender, has rather pushed into the background other factors affecting the relations between the two sides in Cyprus.

One factor, almost literally bubbling under the surface, is the hydrocarbon issue in the eastern Mediterranean. As mentioned in earlier updates, the natural gas discovered south of Cyprus is claimed by the Greek Cypriots to belong to the government of Cyprus, recognized since 1964 as having authority over the whole island by all nations save Turkey. Exploration in adjoining fields is also under way by the Greek Cypriots. Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots object strongly, but are frustrated that they can do little or nothing about it. There is one factor that brings Turkey into play, however, the problem of getting the gas into the European market, where it is most needed, and would be welcome as an alternative, or additional, source not under Russian control. The easiest and cheapest route is via Turkey: to pipe the gas to Greece would be prohibitively expensive. An alternative would be to build a liquefaction plant in Cyprus, but this is said only to be economically viable if gas from the Tamar and Leviathan fields within Israel's claimed 'exclusive economic zone' could also be liquefied there. However, Israel might well not want to have a liquefaction plant on a site outside its own control. The need for Turkish assistance in marketing the gas could turn out to be a positive factor in reaching agreement on the Cyprus problem.

Turkey and Cyprus

At the present time, however, relations between the Republic of Cyprus and Turkey are at the lowest possible ebb, not least because of the Greek Cypriots' influence in the European Union, which has led to the closing of many chapters in Turkey's EU accession process, as well as to the EU's refusal to allow free commerce between the European Union and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Turkish animosity towards the Greek Cypriots was reaffirmed by the Turkish Prime Minister, Tayyip Erdoğan, in a speech in Hungary on 35 February. He first pointed out that, with regard to their economic and human rights' record, many states very inferior to Turkey, had been admitted to EU membership and this for ideological reasons. One such state was the 'Republic of Cyprus', which was 'not a state, but an administration'. Subsequently, the Turkish Cypriot President, Eroğlu, applauded this statement when addressing the summit meeting of the Organization for Islamic Co-operation meeting in Cairo. He reminded the delegates that references to the 'Government of Cyprus' in the UN Security Resolution 186 of 4 March 1964 could only refer to the government as established under the 1960 Constitution. It could not refer to the wholly Greek Cypriot government that had simply assumed power [after its Turkish members had fled to defended enclaves to escape the violence] as the

Government of Cyprus.²¹ Eroğlu further asserted that 'one of the fundamental reasons for the unresolved conflict was the UN Security Council Resolution 186 of 4 March 1964'.

Erdoğan's condemnation of the Greek Cypriot government did not go down well with Anastasiades. His Press Secretary said that 'any prospect of Turkey entering the EU had to pass through the EU member state of Cyprus'.²²

Disaccord in the TRNC

Another factor below the surface that may well affect future negotiations is a marked degree of political unrest in the Turkish Cypriot political scene. There is still much dislike by the labour unions and other social organizations at Turkish influence over national economic policy, and in particular the intention to privatize the utilities, and control public expenditure, not least on the civil service, whose salaries and pensions could not be met without Turkish financial aid. There is also some pressure from Turkey to make Turkish Cypriots more religious.

There is now a significant difference of opinion on the growing influence of Turkey in Turkish Cypriot affairs even among those in the National Unity Party that is in government. A social issue that worries many is the promotion of religion by Turkey, as seen, for instance, in the opening in September 2012 of a religious school, with four teachers said to have been appointed by the Turkish Ministry of Education, and which has reportedly attracted over 700 pupils. On these sorts of economic and social developments one well-informed Turkish Cypriot, Yusuf Kanlı, a columnist in the Turkish *Hürriyet Daily News*, recently wrote as follows:

In the North Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is continuing with a programme of 'zone cleansing' against the nationalists, who insist on not accepting the level of colonization aspired to by the AKP. This reflects the political fight and the rigid polarization within the ruling UBP (National Unity Party). On the one side there is Ankara-supported Prime Minister Küçük, on the other side there is President Derviş Eroğlu-supported Kaşif. This will be a turning point in Turkish Cypriot history. Should they be part of the overall conservative and religious culture that the AKP has been aspiring to support? Or should they maintain their distinct island culture, a mixture of Turkish, Greek and, of course, British cultural heritage/?²³

The conflict between Ahmet Kaşif and İrsen Küçük came to a head in a meeting of the National Unity Party's Congress on 25 February 2013 when Küçük won the leadership of the party with 708 votes against the 701 for his opponent.

The Way Forward?

It seems certain that the UN will try to bring about a renewal of talks between the two sides now that there is a new president in the South. The prospect of agreement will now seem more likely with Anastasiades in charge in the South. Although, as mentioned above, he has in the past spoken of the need for a federation of 'two

²¹ As reported in *Kıbrıs*, 7 February 2013. The UN then treated the Greek Cypriot government as if it was the Government of Cyprus. On this crucial issue see my 'Update, on Cyprus 2012', TASR, Autumn 2012, and further references there. Resolution 186 authorized the introduction of a UN Force into Cyprus in order to help restrain the violence.

²² *Hürriyet Daily News*, 9 February 2013

²³ *Hürriyet Daily News*, 24 February 2013.

states', he will always have to work with, and gain the support of, other parties, on the Cyprus issue.

A federation as a solution is arguably now more than ever important, but in any new negotiations there would still be the very thorny problems of territory and properties relinquished on both sides still to be settled. To some extent the very substantial issue of Greek Cypriot property abandoned in the North has been remedied by the judgements given by the Immoveable Property Commission in the TRNC, a court that was established in December 2005 with the approval of the European Court of Human Rights. Many Greek Cypriots have applied to the Commission, which is staffed partly by European judges. There have been, by December 2012, 4,258 cases before the Court with altogether some £94,327,000 sterling having been paid as compensation by Turkey. Many Greek Cypriots, however, refuse on principle to go to the Court and expect restitution of their property as the result of negotiations for a settlement. This, and the partly attendant, issue of territory, remain as thorny problems to be settled in any negotiations as, too, do the problems regarding the structure of any federal government, though there have been convergences in this last regard, which the UN has indicated it will shortly make known.

Would the two-state solution often urged by the Turkish Cypriots in the past not also meet the bill? A difficulty with that solution now is that the Turkish Cypriots would probably thereby be relinquishing any claim to the profits arising from the new hydrocarbon resources south of the island that are claimed by the Republic of Cyprus. Also the United Kingdom would perhaps have to face a renewed Greek Cypriot claim that the British Base Areas had become part of the Greek Cypriot state, and that, therefore, the 1960 Treaty of Establishment with the Republic of Cyprus was no longer in force. There are always intermittent, but persistent, demands in the South that the British bases should be removed: with a two-state solution they might well come to the fore. The loss of the bases would also probably be a matter of considerable concern to the United States.



An Unresolved Future

If renewed negotiations do not succeed, it is becoming clear that the TRNC will find it hard not to become a virtual, if not an actual, Turkish province. It is difficult to refrain from pointing out that the Greek Cypriots have brought this situation upon themselves by asserting sovereignty over the whole island and by imposing embargoes on the Turkish Cypriots, thus denying them the right to earn a living for themselves, and inevitably inducing Turkish intervention in the affairs of the North. Do the Greek Cypriots really want a virtual, or actual, permanent Turkish province in the island? For their part it seems that most Turkish Cypriots, including many on the nationalist right, would also prefer a bi-zonal federation to their present position, which inevitably puts them more and more under the influence of Turkey. If there is no agreed solution, it seems that the Cyprus problem will drift into a solution neither side really wants, as perhaps both sides are now beginning to realize.



Interview with Buket Uzuner

Writer on the Turkish best-seller lists since 1992

Interviewed by Belma Ötüş Baskett

in November 2012



Buket Uzuner, born in Ankara in 1955, is the well-known author of short stories, essays, travelogues and novels. She won the Yunus Nadi Prize for her novel *The Sound of Fishsteps* (*Balık İzlerinin Sesi*) in 1993 and *Mediterranean Waltz* (*Kumral Ada-Mavi Tuna*) was named 'Novel of the Year' by the University of Istanbul in 1998. *Mediterranean Waltz* has recently been published in Italy, Greece and Israel. Her novel *I am Istanbul* has been published in the USA and her short story collection *A Cup of Turkish Coffee* (*Bir Fincan Kahve*) in England. Uzuner was selected among the 75 most influential women of the Republic of Turkey for the Sabah Group by prominent professionals, civic leaders, members of the press and academia to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. In 1996 she was made an honorary fellow by the University of Iowa. Although Uzuner published her first short story at the age of 18, her formal education was in biology and environmental sciences. She studied and worked at universities in Turkey, Norway, USA and Finland. She has travelled widely and lived for long periods in North Africa, North America and Europe. Now she lives in Istanbul. Her works published in English are:

Novels: *Two green Otters, their Mothers, their Fathers, their Lovers and the others; The Sound of Fishsteps; Mediterranean Waltz, The Long White Cloud - Gallipoli; I am Istanbul, Water* (pending).

Short story collections: *My name is May; The Most Naked Day of the Month; The Sun Eating Gypsy; The Sorrow of the Northwest Wind; The City of Poets; Tale, The Sister of Verse*

Travel writing: *The Travel Notes of a Brunette; The Diary of an Urban Romantic; New York Logbook; Istanbul Logbook.*

Autobiography: *Silver Summer, Silver Girl.*

Interview

'A Writer on Writing'

BÖB: I and the readers want to know all the details of your writing. Let us start at the very beginning. Where do you write? When do you write? What implements do you use?

BU: As you see I have an Office separate from my home but close to it. I have my books there and a big desk. I write with a fountain pen in old-fashioned lined note-books -- thousands of pages for each novel. I am not an early riser but I can write late into the night. I drink a lot of coffee while I write. I cannot compose on the computer, I find it alienating, it distances me from the work.

BÖB: Thank you for showing me some of your notebooks. I am fascinated but I know you are active on Twitter and Facebook. How have the possibilities of the internet affected you?

BU: The internet is an inescapable fact of life now and I basically like new technologies. When a work is ready, I transfer it to the internet myself. On Twitter and Facebook many people write to me. It takes up a lot of my time. Most of the messages are complimentary and ego-boosting for me but some can be annoying because some people can become impertinent because of the anonymity the medium gives them.

BÖB: You started by writing short stories. At 18 you published your first short story. But by now you have published novels, essays and travelogues. Did you plan it this way?

BU: There was a time when I thought I might stay just a short story writer like Tomris Uyar. But novel writing was beckoning and it seemed an audacious step. I thought short story writing would prepare me for writing novels. Novels contain many stories; it is the plot that shapes them into a novel. Every human being has a story that has to be told. The art of writing comes in sorting and ordering these stories. Differences and similarities between people, between cultures are fascinating but basic humanity does not change.

BÖB: How does the writing process proceed? Do you allow separate time slots for creation and writing? Do you invent as you write? Do you know the end when you start?

BU: Creativity is the important part of the writing. Writing is a risky business. A writer cannot write without taking risks. The important part of my writing is creating the characters; a character can take over. While writing *Mediterranean Waltz*, I had not planned that Aras would die but having created a character like him, he decided his own fate.



BÖB: I know you do a lot of research for your novels. For example these days you say you are writing a novel entitled *Earth*, the second in your tetralogy, following *Water*. You have been spending time in Çorum doing research on Shamanism, the religion of Turks before Islam. You spent time in Çorum before *Water* was published, too. Will those research trips continue while you write *Air* and *Fire*?

BU: While writing *Gallipoli*, I spent five years living in a village in Çanakkale. I also went to the New York Public Library to read many letters written by soldiers during the Gallipoli war. Only then did I feel I could write the letters in the novel. While writing *Mediterranean Waltz* I spent long hours for many months in the Çınaraltı coffeehouse in Kuzguncuk. For the tetralogy I have found out many details about food and clothing of Shamans in Çorum. I also had a chance to attend weddings and funerals, joined their dances and songs and elegies. Interacting with local people is very valuable for me.

BÖB: You write many drafts of a novel before you are satisfied. Do you destroy those drafts or are they accumulating in cupboards, waiting for future PhD students to study them? Do you have finished but unpublished work lying around?

BU: Writing takes a long time, also it is necessary to leave the writing to mature. For a good cup of tea you have to wait till it is brewed properly. I dream of literary museums, writers museums. I would like to set up a foundation to create a museum.

BÖB: Your philosophy of art does not seem to be 'art for art's sake'. How concerned are you with style? Is 'message' more important than style? Do you use your art in the service of achieving a purpose?

BU: Every novel deals with a 'problem'. In *Gallipoli* I was concerned with heroism: How could a man be a hero in two countries? I was miffed when New Zealand would not allow the publication of my novel there. So I mailed copies to many of their public libraries. *Two green Otters* and *Water* are concerned with saving nature and endangered animals. Right now I am very much involved with dolphins. I am working with a group of like-minded people to get the Turkish government to outlaw dolphin parks in south-west Turkey. I hate the idea of writing to give a message. I write and readers make of it what they like; each book means a different thing to each reader.

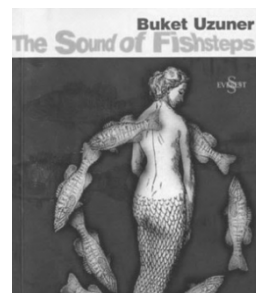
BÖB: While you are writing a novel, do you concentrate on that or do you write an essay or a short story on the side? You seem to be travelling a lot, too. Does that mean that we can expect a travelogue soon? Or do you want to be a novelist from now on?

BU: Writing is an art of words, of finding the right word. Short story writing comes close to poetry writing, so I am very fond of it and I will write in whatever genre seems suitable at the time.

BÖB: How do you get the idea for a novel?

BU: Well, for *Gallipoli* some photographs gave me the idea. I had gone to Galatasaray High-School to register my son. On one wall there were the names of the graduating class of 1915 who had never graduated; they had all gone to fight in Gallipoli and all had died. This affected me so deeply that I lost my place in the registration queue and the tragedy never left me until I could lay it to rest with a novel.

BÖB: You claim that a writer is an exhibitionist. Do you live thinking that all your experiences and all your memories will someday, somehow be reflected in your work? Do you ever live for the moment or just for yourself? Is it hard to keep your personal life private? I mean how much in your novels is based on real personal experience, how much is fiction? For example was your experience of writers' colonies behind *Fishsteps*?



BU: Part of my personal life is very private, I guard it jealously. I like to keep my readers mostly wandering in fictional labyrinths. The ambience of *Fishsteps* was inspired by my dormitory in the university I attended in Norway, even the name is the same except for one word. My Norwegian friends recognized it immediately.

BÖB: You have attended many writers' workshops, residencies and colonies, mainly in America, I think. Were they useful? In what way? Can they actually help with style or actual writing? Or do they create peace and quiet or a respite from the drain of daily life? Was the interaction with other writers important or profitable? At a writers' colony you were asked to talk about: "How I write the way I write?" What did you tell them?

BU: I found them very useful, but they come later in life. The most important thing for a writer is to have a good mentor at the beginning. I was lucky to have Atilla İlhan who guided me. At the time I took my first short stories to the Varlık Journal, his office there was like a literary club or a school. I was very lucky he admitted me. To the writers' colony you mention, I gave an answer that started everyone talking. I told them the works of Buket Uzuner were the result of the collaboration of identical twin sisters, one very shy, the other outgoing. My twin sister in Istanbul did the writing while I travelled and did the public relations. At writers' colonies I formed lasting friendships. Brainstorming sessions with similar writers were experiences I cherish.

BÖB: Who are some writers who have influenced you?

BU: Bülent Ecevit, Uğur Mumcu, Gertrude Stein, Anais Nin; I could go on, but Romain Gary takes precedence over all other writers. You cannot be in literature, not having read Romain Gary. He was a passionate advocate of humanism. In his works he vehemently condemned every form of deception and deceit. He is also admirable for his sincere support of feminism.

BÖB: You are not the writer in the ivory tower; you travelled with a backpack to many parts of the world. Why? You say you have favourite cities, what is it that endears them to you; now that you have been to London more than once? How do you feel about London?

BU: I travel because I like adventure. As a writer I am more like Hemingway than Kafka. My favourite cities are New York and Istanbul. At one time I added Paris but lately I have replaced it with Madrid. Cities are built by human beings and have characters like people. Those three cities are like me. They are alive 24 hours; they are full of chaos and contradictions. I love them passionately. I can say I love London in a platonic way.

BÖB: Why is literature necessary? What is the function of literature?

BU: Literature holds a mirror to life and makes us aware. It points out the relation between human beings and nature. Literature is necessary to shed light on the dark alleys inside us. Also literature prevents monotony – only one type of everything.

BÖB: What is your definition of utopia?

BU: Utopia is a world without borders, focused on the well-being of human beings with empathy among people. When I say human beings, I exclude totalitarians, dictators and people who are concerned only with making money. I am a secular humanist.

BÖB: There was a period in your life when you had to do various jobs (I am not sure what jobs) for six months – to earn enough money to be able to write for six months. Did you dream what it would have been like to have been born to riches? Looking back now do you think those experiences enriched your life and your writing?

BU: Those were invaluable experiences. I would not want to have anything changed. I had access to a world outside my normal contacts. I taught English at a Nokia Office in Finland. They thought I was American! I babysat a five-month old once a week and was privy to their family life. I worked as pan-cake maker in a breakfast restaurant in Norway. I distributed newspapers door to door. Some of these were summer jobs while I was a student. I worked as a public relations manager in a hotel but my best paying job was working as a creative writer in an advertising agency. The danger in having a well-paying job is the difficulty of leaving it. I think high salaries keep many people from doing what they really like.

BÖB: How does your science background affect your literary career?

BU: My science training has taught me to be disciplined and to value research. There is an organic relationship among mathematics, philosophy and literature. Setting up the plot of a novel is close to engineering work. In a country where writing is not considered a profession, my science degree and work experience sets me apart. Do you know that when Sait Faik said his profession was writing, the policeman wrote down ‘jobless’? That was in the 40’s. Sevgi Soysal had a similar experience in the 70’s. When she said she was a writer, the policeman wrote ‘housewife’. I do not think attitudes have changed yet.

BÖB: I have heard you talk of psychomythology. What exactly do you mean by it? And how do you use it in your works?

BU: It is a Freudian concept that tells us to study myths to understand a culture. If you read Deli Dumrul stories, for example, you learn a lot about Turkish character.

BÖB: Do you see your women characters as role models for Turkish women?

BU: No, never, I hate that idea. What I like is when my readers tell me they find themselves in my books. Often a woman reader approaches me to say I have written about her, her character.

BÖB: What advice can you give to aspiring writers?

BU: The first thing to do is to ask themselves why they want to be a writer. If it is for fame or money, they should forget it. They should start writing only if they have a passion for it and nothing else will satisfy them.

BÖB: Very good advice! It is so pleasant and fruitful to talk to you that I could gladly continue but I know you are busy. I shall be following your publications as will your readers. I am especially looking forward to reading the next three novels of your tetralogy.





NEZİHE MERİÇ (1925-2009)

THE IRREPRESSIBLE NARRATOR (Part 2)

by Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy

Writer and Translator

Part 2 (continued from No 20)

Worldwide political turmoil in the Cold War years, resulting in deep ideological chasms of the 1960s and 1970s, deeply affected life in Turkey. Nezihe Meriç wrote several short stories about this period, which was published in her book *Dumanaltı* (Under the Smoke, 1979).

The story *Umut'a Tezgâh Kurmak* (To Set Up a Stall for Hope, 1976), written in the first person, is about the experiences of a woman, a teacher of literature in a high school, just released from prison after two years of incarceration. She had told her husband and her son not to meet her at the gate of the prison. As she is waiting for the bus to go home she reminisces about all the events leading to her arrest and her life in jail. Political inmates were sharing the same ward as ordinary criminals. These people and their relationships go through her head like a movie. Among them the portrait of an elderly woman, Boncuk Hanım, stands out as a model of integrity. This woman had allowed some young rebels to take refuge in the basement of her unoccupied old house. She acted out of empathy for young people, unaware of their political activities. She represents a type that is always against the greedy money-grabbing new bourgeoisie who happen to exist in her own family. Nezihe Meriç invents this elderly woman to represent human values, love, and common decency, counteracting cynicism.

Another old woman, a hermit, an archetype, is the subject of the short story, *Acıyı Aşmak* (To Go Beyond Suffering, 1976-1979), narrated by a woman who watches her from a distance in her vacation place on the Aegean coast, across the Greek islands, where the winds blow carrying the scents of thyme, sage and ripe figs. On top of a hill a very old woman crippled by age lives alone in a shack. She is the last member of a family which had immigrated from Bulgaria during the Balkan wars. The villagers nearby put some food for her under an olive tree on the slope of the hill, and she leaves the figs she gathers in exchange. One day three tired young men running away from the gendarmes end up in her place. The old woman tries her best to feed them and give them some comfort. The food left under the olive tree disappears much more quickly than usual, which makes the villagers wonder. At the end these young men are discovered and shot. The news spreads everywhere: "Three anarchists were caught!" Yes, the gunshots were heard because they were caught and killed. The old woman comes running down the hill and yelling at the top of her voice, "Infidels, what have you done to my sons?" (p 151)

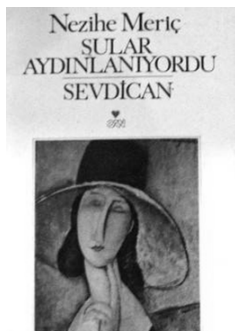
The narrator is sobbing uncontrollably and keeps thinking, “Ah! I could have saved them.” At a distance she could hear the happy shouts of the young vacationers. Her three boys were among them. Her husband rebukes her for having an over-developed social consciousness and for the shallowness of her reasoning. He always lectured her on the futility of young people’s struggles for equality. She says to herself:

“There was no peace and order in the country. Rightists, leftists, rabble-rousers, the army, the police, the parties, the government, the intellectuals and the people – all were in a mess. All I wanted to do was to have our children, whom we raised with so much struggle, not be killed.” (p 152)

This subject is taken up again in *Tan’ın Öyküsü* (Tan’s Story, 1978). A group of friends meet in a restaurant in Bodrum – the wonderful town of sea and sunshine, of white houses covered with bougainvillea. But there is martial law and the news of the arrests of friends keeps coming. Tan is the son of a poet-writer in the group. He is very excited about the fishing trip he will go on the next morning. But the police arrive and ask Tan’s father to go with them to the police station for interrogation. The party is broken up and they all wait for the arrested friend at the police station. Next day Tan’s parents return home, the father escorted by the police. Friends take Tan for the fishing trip and when he goes back home his mother tries to lighten the situation by telling jokes about the police who sacked their apartment and their interrogation. She hints that they may come back and ask him questions too. Tan asks, “Mommy, could they really question me too?” Then he adds, “They should ask the third grade questions, we haven’t studied the fourth grade yet!” (p.143). The innocence of the child strikes a poignant note of irony. There are many more ‘Bodrum Stories’ in the collection entitled *Bir Kara Derin Kuyu* (A Bottomless Black Pit, 1989) that take up humorously the confrontations of native Bodrum people with the tourists who flock into their town during vacations.



Nezihe Meriç is much more hopeful in her children’s stories. In *Alagün Çocukları* (Children of Alagün, 1976) Ali, the son of a couple who migrated from a village to a city to work as janitor and cleaning woman, finds an old lady who lives alone in a house at the end of a road on the outskirts of the city. This retired teacher becomes a cultural mentor to the bright boy Ali. The series of stories called *Küçük Bir Kız Tanıyorum* (I Know a Little Girl) is about the life of Ayşe from the age of six to the age of twelve – her family, her neighborhood, her school life – all written both from the point of view of the inner development of this girl as it relates to the happenings in the big wide world outside.



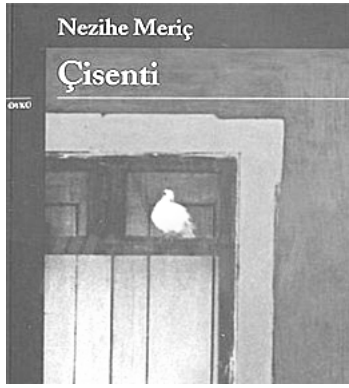
Nezihe Meriç wrote two other plays after *Sular Aydınlanıyordu* (The Waters Were Illuminated, 1969): *Sevdican* (1984), which was staged in Germany, and *Çın Sabahta* (At the Crack of Dawn, 1995). Both plays have only women characters who fight to have their place in society and make living more meaningful like Hayriye of her first play.

The story *Erol Bey* in the collection *Under the Smoke* is about an elderly pampered bachelor who lives with seven women (all relatives apart from one servant) in an old decaying mansion on the Bosphorus. Each of these women is portrayed vividly in their appearances and idiosyncrasies representing different times and circumstances of life in Istanbul. They are all emotionally tied to Erol Bey and he to them; yet he also likes to get away from them and finds solace in his excursions to drink joints where he imbibes his daily share of *rakı* and talks to his fellow drinkers who are not on the same cultural level. This charming drunkard Erol Bey resists the plot by a vulgar profit-seeking contractor to demolish his decaying mansion and erect a multi-storeyed apartment house. Nezihe Meriç gave the most poetic descriptions of the Bosphorus in this forty page long story which can be called a novella. It gives the reader a sense of bygone days without sentimentality. It is also a soul searching narrative about how to construct a story. Nezihe Meriç used this approach in her later stories.

Most of Nezihe Meriç's stories were written in the first person. All these I's may not necessarily be Nezihe Meriç herself, but a sign of identification that stretches over a whole range of women – the neglected gender. There are, of course, many men in Nezihe Meriç's stories. Some are dissatisfied middle class men who are not able to achieve their goals. There is also a whole new class of men who come to the cities from the villages and work as janitors. They live with their families in the damp basements of apartment houses, providing all the services of the building and some personal shopping for the tenants. In the story *Büyük Liman İçine de Pazar Kurulur Pazar* (Markets can be set up inside the big Harbor too) there are men from different regions of the country, hawking fruit and vegetables. We can hear their voices, smell and see the colors of their produce as Nezihe Meriç describes them so vividly.

From the first publications of the stories of Nezihe Meriç, they were critically acclaimed by well known contemporary writers. Her stories were considered truly original, with a genuine flowing narrative style using words with the sensitivity of a painter and a poet. Her sharp observations of women's lives and their conscious or unconscious rebellions were praised. Yet, at the same time, some critics – Asım Bezirci, Fethi Naci, Ahmet Oktay and a few others – commented that she did not have a social point of view. She did not delve deeply into the socio-economic causes of the conflicts and their influence on the plight of women. Her rebellion was more of an individualistic rebellion of a woman, or a mother. According to these critics, if women did not organize socially they could never get out of their plight.²⁴ However, these stories, written many years ago, still possess their human and emotional forcefulness. Perhaps a more doctrinaire approach may have weakened the human and moral outrage of a woman, a mother. It is the strength of that voice that makes the stories appealing today.

²⁴ Bezirci, op. cit. This book includes many reviews and excerpts from reviews of Nezihe Meriç's work.



In her later years Nezihe Meriç's creativity did not stop. She published two short story collections *Çisenti* (Drizzling, 2005) and *Gülün İçinde Bülbül Sesi Var* (The Rose contains the Song of the Nightingale, 2008). She also wrote a movie script *Oradan da Geçti Kara Leylekler* (The Black Storks Flew over There Too, 2006). An important theme in the later story collections is the exploration of her thoughts on the logistics of writing a short story. In the collection *Drizzling* the long title of one of the stories is *Dünyaya Gelmek İsteyip İstemediğimi Soran Olmadı. Nasıl Yaşamak İstedığıme Geline...*

Yaşamöykümden, Bir Küçük Bölüm Yazabilirim, Örnek Olarak (Nobody Asked Me If I Wanted To Come Into This World, Or How I Wanted To Live... I Can Only Write A Small Chapter Of My Life Story As An Example). These are the words of a woman who moves to a town on the Aegean coast to live alone, just to write. She feels totally free as she repeats the words of the master short story writer Sait Faik "I can't live without writing" (p.57). In the same collection a story in four parts, named *Bu Bir Uzun Hikâyedir Orasından Burasından Yazılmıştır* (This Is A Long Story Written From Here And From There, pp. 35-56), takes place in a Mediterranean town. A doctor, an elderly intellectual recluse, a young woman teacher, a widow with two children and the town's wise-fool are the main characters whose lives intermingle. There is also an old local woman Kuma Gelin (a common-law wife in a polygamous marriage) who sometimes narrates the town's past happenings. The four parts of this story do not follow a chronological sequence. In the first part the widow's son, now a grown man living in a large city breaks up with his wife and returns to the Mediterranean town where he grew up. His mother had opened a restaurant there to support her children and the place had become the town's center of the good life. The intellectual doctor was a mentor for him. The young teacher who observes and thinks about the people around her also listens to Kuma Gelin's and the wise-fool's stories. One day she may become a writer. 'Written from Here and from There' may seem like notes for a novel but it works perfectly as a short story because its power lies in the vivid expressiveness of its language and the development of the attachments of its characters who were strangers at the outset.

In the collection entitled *The Rose Contains the Song of the Nightingale* (pp. 12-25), the story *Kıpırtı Hanım* (Lively Lady) is about an elderly woman who considers living in Istanbul the greatest blessing in the world. Every day she goes out carrying her nylon handbag that contains cookies and other edibles she bakes in fair amounts in case there is a chance to offer them to somebody she meets on her excursions. All day long she takes walks in different parts of Istanbul. She loves to sit in a shady corner on the shores of the Bosphorus or she climbs a hill with the view of the sea. As she settles down on her rickety stool she takes her crochet and thread out of her handbag and starts making lace. She also thinks, always thinks. One day a painter with his easel appears at the pier and starts painting. The two become great friends. She keeps talking as he paints. The painter tells the lively lady that they are doing the same thing. "I paint, you make lace." She demurs and says, "Oh, God, not at all, not at all!" As time goes by the painter stops coming and moves to a seashore town. But he writes a book about the lively lady that contains all the stories she told him and sends it to her. She reads the book slowly with tears in her eyes:

“Wherever you stand in this city the sea surrounds and embraces you, even if you don’t see it. Istanbul is the city of the sea. Istanbul smells of the sea. In Istanbul the breezes and the winds of the sea blow; they contain the shrieks of the seagulls, the putputs of the motor boats and the whistles of the ferries, the moaning of the nightingales and their love songs in the ancient forests that are no more.”

Ah, lively lady!

The stories in the last collections cannot be defined as closures. Nezihe Meriç felt that she could go on writing. The story entitled *Yanmışım Dumanım Tüter* (I was on Fire and my Smoke is up the Air) in *The Rose Contains the Song of the Nightingale* (pp. 7-14) starting with the sentence, ‘We became acquainted with death’, was written after her husband’s death in 2005. She is sitting alone in a dark room observing the stillness of her surroundings, musing about the sounds of the words and the letters of the alphabet and wondering how to express the overwhelming depth of her loss. This story has an open-ended feeling that she intends to write about this subject again.

In this essay I have tried to show the essential features of Nezihe Meriç’s literary career that spanned almost six decades. I have followed a chronological order and have given samples from her short stories that illuminated the Turkish life of those decades as seen by a Turkish woman writer. Memories of her childhood are taken up again in the story *Drizzling 6* (pp.91-94): “When I think about my childhood, to me it seems like a fairy tale. First there was this big sky, with its clouds and stars so eye-catching. I felt as if it was my shell. It was always there.” Then little Nezihe running in the fields toward the mountains. There were mountains everywhere. She was singing a school song at the top of her voice. Father was always sent to another post in another Anatolian town. Their belongings piled up on a truck, the family went riding over the mountains with dangerous curves...There were tears, sorrow and nostalgia. None of the towns left behind belonged to her. Then moving to Istanbul – the first experience of being surrounded by the sea! For decades witnessing the transformation of a metropolis and expressing an inevitable feeling of loss again. This may seem like a full circle going back to times when her true identity was formed. But her search for the meaning of life continued in her later stories as she expressed it with these words: “As one walks in the arduous road of life each person’s heart beats by itself whether one finds, or does not, or could not find the magic of life, that unknowable entity.” (*The Rose Contains the Song of the Nightingale*, p.57).

Nezihe Meriç started her writing career at a time when modern Turkish literature had already made big strides in the first half of the twentieth century. This was true for the other art forms like painting, sculpture and music. Folklore studies in this period also contributed to a deeper understanding of the language and the oral traditions. Translations from foreign languages (both classics and contemporary literature) increased and widened the horizons of literature. In the interview with Asım Bezirci, Nezihe Meriç said that she was deeply moved when she first read the short stories of Sait Faik (1906-1959) who was writing about common folk and the fishermen of the islands in the Marmara Sea. She also mentions Sabahattin Ali, Orhan Kemal and poets Nazım Hikmet, Orhan Veli, Cahit Külebi, Oktay Rifat, Attila İlhan and many other literary figures of the time. Yet, one cannot



identify any single influence as such in her work which was more of her own invention as she introduced new voices into literature in her stories. The search for multiple aspects of reality, questioning of values and, above all, the importance of a simpler language were all a part of the new literature and she wrote her stories in this atmosphere. Reading her spontaneous and lively stories today, even the ones written a long time ago, one is still influenced by their daring narration. Even the titles of the stories – *Thirsty*, *Lame Running*, *Murky Affairs*, *Under the Smoke*, *Drizzling*, *A Black Bottomless Pit* – evoke metaphors with deep meanings.

As the translator of some of Nezihe Meriç's stories into English I would like to say that in spite of their genuine Turkish locales, subjects and characters their essential humanity does get across in translation and would appeal to readers who cannot read them in Turkish.

THE TURKISH REPUBLIC IN RETROSPECT

by Andrew Mango

Historian and Journalist



The following is the text of an address given by Dr Mango on 20 September 2012 when he received his fourth Turkish honorary doctorate – from Çanakkale University.

Your Excellencies, friends and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I thank Ambassador and Madam Ünal Çeviköz for their kindness and generosity in hosting tonight's reception. And I thank the Senate of the University of Çanakkale in the person of its Assistant Rector Professor Handan Işın Özışık Karaman, who is here tonight accompanied by her colleague Assistant Professor Dr Rüstem Aslan, for its decision to award me an honorary Ph.D. This is my fourth and surely last award from a Turkish university, and it is appropriate that it should have come from the University of Çanakkale.



The battle of Çanakkale is the name given in Turkish history for what we know in the West as the Gallipoli campaign, and it is in Gallipoli that Mustafa Kemal won his military spurs which allowed him to assume the leadership of the Turkish national struggle against the country's partition decided by the victorious Allies at the end of

the First World War. And yet it is important to get the historical record straight, as I have tried to do in my biography of Atatürk²⁵, the work by which I am best known.

The full name of Çanakkale University is the 18th March University of Çanakkale. Yet the battle of 18th March 1915 was a naval engagement in which Mustafa Kemal as an infantry commander had no part. Moreover, as I pointed out in my biography, successful as Mustafa Kemal certainly was in containing the Allied – British and Anzac – landings in the Gallipoli peninsula, it is an exaggeration to describe Mustafa Kemal as the sole saviour of the Ottoman capital, Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal was a highly successful sector commander, who served under superior Ottoman generals, and ultimately the German overall commander, Marshal Liman von Sanders. Also, while Mustafa Kemal's success impressed his colleagues in the Ottoman army, he remained virtually unknown not only in the West, but also in his own country, until he assumed the leadership of the national struggle.

There is another misconception prevalent particularly in this country. I was recently asked by the Imperial War Museum in London to defend in a debate the argument that Atatürk was Britain's greatest enemy. I declined, saying that, as I pointed out in my last book *From Sultan to Atatürk* citing quotations which I owed to the Turkish popular historian and newspaper columnist Taha Akyol, while Mustafa Kemal was certainly Britain's military opponent in the Gallipoli campaign, and a political opponent of the policy of Britain's war leader Lloyd George after the war, far from being Britain's enemy, Mustafa Kemal was an admirer of Britain as a civilised imperial power, and had no difficulty in joining Britain in later years in diplomatic efforts to preserve the peace after the war.

When I pointed this out in my books, I thought that I courted unpopularity in Turkey. One Western reviewer called my biography iconoclastic. I was delighted when I found out that my revisionism of what is now disparaged in Turkey as 'official history' was not just acceptable but welcome to most of my Turkish readers – even although fashionable anti-imperialists had reservations.

What I had not anticipated was that my revisionism was mild in comparison with the frontal attack on so-called 'official history' that was to develop in Turkey, and the criticism often amounting to denigration of Atatürk's role in Turkish history. The current assault on official history ranges from the frankly preposterous – like the story recently launched that Mustafa Kemal was born not in Salonica, but in Malatya, and was of Armenian origin – to the frankly anachronistic like the opinion embraced by all my liberal friends in Turkey that Atatürk was to blame because he was a dictator. As if a successful commander and then leader of a population which was more than 90 per cent illiterate, a people which he shaped into a nation and whose progress he ensured by giving priority to 'education, education, education' to use Tony Blair's mantra – as if such a leader could be anything other than authoritarian. Moreover, dictators do not delegate their powers to the extent that Atatürk did in the last years of his presidency when he complained that all he had left to do was to sign laws and decrees drawn up and implemented by subordinates who shared his vision.

And yet the current denigration of 'official history' and of the role which it assigns to Atatürk is a tribute to the solidity of the foundations he had laid for the new republic. It is because Turkish opinion-formers feel secure that they can question the

²⁵ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk*, 1999, London: John Murray, 666 pp., £30. ISBN 0-7195-56120

assumptions that they had been taught at school. They can acknowledge the sufferings of minorities inseparable from the creation of a Turkish national state. The deportation of the Armenians can be openly deplored in Turkey, while no Armenian historian will question the mistakes of his people's nationalist leaders when they tried to establish an Armenian national state in an area where the Armenians were a minority. With Greece a degree of mutual frankness was established as early as the 1930s, but to this day initiatives to renew friendships come mainly from the Turkish side.

As far as domestic attitudes are concerned in Turkey, a nation vastly better educated, healthier and more prosperous than when Atatürk fashioned the republic, can afford to question what liberals call 'the tutelage' which brought them to their current level. If that level is not yet 'the level of contemporary civilisation', which Atatürk set as his target, it is because Turkey has experienced a population explosion, which is now coming to an end, an explosion which was most marked in the most deprived parts of the country. As a result, more and more people have had to be led to the 'level of contemporary civilisation' – a never-ending labour of Sisyphus.

Progress resolves some old problems, but creates new ones. Thus the Kurdish question which preoccupies Turkey is the consequence of the development of a formerly backward region and of the spread of education to it. People, who criticise Atatürk for today's Kurdish problem, underestimate his realism. Atatürk's attitude reminds me of the response of the British economist Lord Keynes when he was accused of inconsistency. "When facts change", Keynes said, "I change my views accordingly. Pray, what do you do?"

Perhaps I do not myself change my views sufficiently in today's changing scene.



When I set myself against the current fashion of general revision of Turkish history, I feel like a dinosaur, to borrow from the title *Memoirs of a Dinosaur* which Mina Urgan gave to her self-deprecating autobiography. I did not know Mina Urgan, the *grande dame* of Turkish freethinking left-wing intellectuals, professor of English literature at Istanbul University, translator of Shakespeare, a student of French literature, and an enthusiastic traveller as she explains in her last book *Travels of a Dinosaur*. I did not know her, but I knew people who sat at her feet in her house in what, before the developers moved in, was the charming garden suburb of Moda overlooking Istanbul harbour from the shore of Asia. When told that her last two books, written when she was in her eighties, had become best-sellers, she said "There must be something wrong. My serious studies of English literature sold only a few hundred copies". Mina Urgan belonged to the first generation of Republican intellectuals and expressed the openness to the world, excitement and utopianism of that generation.

I belong to the generation that followed, a generation that saw Turkey transformed from a poor, backward country with a small enlightened elite and a large illiterate or semi-literate population, to an educated entrepreneurial society, a member of the G-20 – the twenty most advanced economies in the world, which exports not only industrial products but highly trained professionals. The spread of modern knowledge has been a crucial factor in Turkey's success. When higher education

was organised on modern lines in Turkey in 1933 with the help of academic refugees from Nazi Germany, there was only one university in the country, in Istanbul, the largest city. Today there are 154 universities providing instruction to nearly four million students, many of them women. Turkey attracts thousands of foreign students, while itself sending thousands for specialised training in the West. Çanakkale University which celebrates this year the 20th anniversary of its foundation and which has increased its student enrolment to 36,000, is proof of the immense progress achieved. And as a witness to the transformation, whose own travels in Turkey started at the end of the Second World War, and who, thanks to a career in the BBC, has seen and thus been able to make comparisons between Turkey and other countries of southern Europe, I cannot take part in the current offensive against 'official history', which emphasises the crucial role of Atatürk as founder and shaper of the Turkish Republic and of his vision of Turkey as member of the family of civilised nations. If my stand against revisionists means that I have become a dinosaur, so be it. This makes me all the more grateful to the University of Çanakkale for its appreciation of my work over a lifetime of following Turkey's progress, and to our hosts Ambassador and Mme Ünal Çeviköz for giving me the opportunity to deliver my swansong in these elegant surroundings.

1218 – WHEN MY FAMILY RODE INTO TURKEY...

by Osman Streater

Writer and PR Consultant

Part I



Not many Turkish families can trace their history back that far! The Menemencioğlus can because of their unique family chronicle²⁶ which describes everything from conflicts to concubines. In 1865 my great great grandfather Ahmed Bey, the *Derebey* or Lord of the Valley of the Karaisalı region of Cilicia between Adana and the Taurus mountains, patriarch of the nomadic Menemencioğlu tribe, commander of a private army of 1,200 horsemen, ultimate owner of – inter alia – 80,000 sheep, 20,000 mountain goats, 18,000 cattle and 2,000 camels, not to mention an unspecified number of Nubian concubines, was deposed by an Ottoman 'Reform Division' or *Fırka-i İslahiyye* sent by sea from Istanbul.

Ahmed Bey was treated more favourably than the other Cilician Lords of the Valleys who were deposed at the same time. Whereas the others were exiled to remote parts of the Ottoman Empire, he was moved with his family and servants to Istanbul and given a very comfortable pension of 5,000 piastres a month to see him through his enforced

²⁶ The family chronicle of the Menemencioğlus was handwritten by the last Bey, Ahmed Bey, as a retirement task after his overthrow in the 1860s. Osman Streater, who taught himself to read Ottoman script, came across a manuscript in the library of his late grandfather Muvaffak Menemencioğlu, photocopied it and wrote about it. In 1997 a transliteration of the entire chronicle into modern Turkish prepared by Yılmaz Kurt was published as *Menemencioğlu Ahmed Bey Menemencioğluları Tarihi* (Istanbul: AKCAG). Eds.

retirement, which he spent encouraging his sons to get a French education and putting the finishing touches to a chronicle he had written in 1861 of the history of the tribe. This chronicle, the *Menemencioğlu Aşiret Tarihi*, which traces back the Menemencis to their arrival in Asia Minor in the 13th century, was described by the late Faruk Sümer as “an event which is very rarely encountered in the history of Turkey”. Unfortunately, Professor Sümer then went off at a tangent, disagreeing with what the chronicle says about the origins of the tribal name, and advancing a theory of his own without supporting evidence, something which Turkish historians of the old school were wont to do. (Briefly, he insisted that the name owed its origins to the scrambled egg dish *menemen*.)

The chronicle states that the original Menemenci rode into Asia Minor in 1218 in the retinue of the father and grandfather of the future founder of the Ottoman dynasty. “He was called Habib Çelebi. He settled in the place called Menemen, which is to the north of Izmir and five or ten hours distant. Migrating with about fifteen or twenty relatives and with his followers and their households he came to the province of Adana and took the name Menemenli and later Menemenci from their old homeland. Although the present population of the Menemenci tribe consists of several thousand households, most of these came from İçel and other places, or are descended from households that came under the rule of our ancestor....our ancestor’s migration here is thought to have taken place two hundred years ago.”

This unusual account of the ancient origins of the Menemencis finds some support in a passage at the very end of the chronicle, where Ahmed Bey is describing how he was told of the family’s impending exile. Informed by the Governor that an Imperial order had been received for their being shipped under escort to Istanbul, Ahmed Bey asked: “Sir, you have been our *Vali* for three years, can you tell me where I have been at fault?” The Governor replied: “I cannot say that you are at fault, but you have fame and a reputation. The word is that to say ‘Menemencioğlu’ is to say ‘sword’. Please have all your people gather under your roof. The ship will sail in a day or two.” Ahmed Bey replied that he would send his eldest son to inform his family of their forthcoming journey. The Reform Division officers, knowing from past experience of escape bids, refused and said that he should send someone unrelated to him. Whereupon one local official, Sururi Efendi, turned to them and said of Ahmed Bey: “This man before you is different. His is a dynasty (*hanedan*) of three or four hundred years’ standing. He cannot be dealt with like the others.” Ahmed Bey’s wish was then immediately granted and his son sent to round up the women, children and servants.

So the Menemencis were different. In fact, they were different in a number of ways. Whereas all the other Derebeys were called ‘Ağa’, in the old provincial fashion, the Menemencis uniquely insisted on ‘Bey’. When his first pension payment came addressed to him as ‘Ağa’ Ahmed Bey refused to accept it and forced the authorities to re-address him as he wanted. Another way in which they were different lies in the number of animals I listed at the outset: scrupulously counted by Victor Langlois, whose *Voyage dans la Cilicie* of 1861 was researched and published on the instructions of Emperor Napoleon III, their sheer quantity indicates that the Menemencioğlus must have been at least relatively more interested in honest agriculture as a money-making pursuit, as opposed to the brigandage which occupied the sole attention of some other tribes: the need to stamp out the brigandage had become impossible to ignore by 1865. (The Nubian concubines are mentioned in the chronicle as saving bedding from Ahmed Bey’s Harem when enemies set it on fire in 1848.)

Langlois also counts the number of houses, as opposed to tents, and the 3,000 he credits to the Menemencis are more than all the houses of all the other tribes put together. This tends to show that the Menemencioğlus were not as rough and uncouth as some of their neighbours and enemies, which in turn helps explain why they attracted less contemporary interest from Western travellers: roughness and uncouthness were features which fascinated the travellers.

Here, for example, is the description by James Skene, traveller and sometime British Consul in Aleppo, of his visit to the Menemencioğlus' enemies the Kozanoğlus in his 1853 book *Anadol, the last home of the faithful*: "Some thirty or forty tents of goats'-hair cloth were extended in a semicircle on a rising ground, with a scarlet flag hoisted on a spear in front of the largest of them. Rows of fleet horses were picketed by the feet, moored stem and stern, as clippers are along a wharf; and bulky camels, with trussed fore-legs, just brought from the road to discharge the spoil they bore lay like deeply laden Indiamen at anchor in the offing and guarded by the privateers which had captured them; while delicate greyhounds, with feathered tails and legs, frisked to and fro... A circle of wild-looking Turcomans rose to receive us in the principal tent. They bade us welcome, and made us squat with them on coarse carpets, smoke the most delicious tobacco with pipes of pine branches, and drink bitter black coffee out of common earthenware. A supper of cream, honey, sour curds with *pilav*, and messes of melted mutton fat with onions; grave discussions on things in general; oft-repeated washings of many hands; and a wadded cotton quilt to sleep on, if the roving, tickling, biting nature of its dense population militate not against that desirable result; such were the more prominent amongst the many novel features of our entertainment. It is surprising how comfortable they make you in a Turcoman tent."

Meanwhile William Burchardt Barker, 'for many years resident at Tarsus in an official capacity', also writing in 1853 in his *Lares & Penates or Cilicia and its Governors*, was fascinated by the activities of another tribe: the Küçükhalioğlu, whose base at Payas, near the site of Alexander the Great's victory at Issus, gave them control of the pilgrimage and trade route to Aleppo. Barker noted that their patriarch 'prided himself on the discipline he maintained'. "I am not," he would say, "as other Lords of the Valley are, fellows without faith, who allow their men to stop travellers on the Sultan's highway; I am content with what God sends me. I await his good pleasure, and *Elhamdülillah*, God be praised, He never leaves me long in the want of anything."

So if what it says in the chronicle is true, and I see no reason why it shouldn't be, the Menemencis first settled in Menemen near the Aegean after their entry into Anatolia in 1218-19, and then as the chronicle also says made their way as a small family grouping of fifteen to twenty households across Anatolia to Cilicia. Ahmed Bey is clearly telescoping several generations into one when he implies that it was the original Habib who made the journey from Menemen to Cilicia: Habib was a common Menemenci name. Moreover, the two hundred years before the time of his chronicle that Ahmed Bey dates the migration at works out at about 1660. However, we know from other sources that they in fact entered Cilicia from the neighbouring province of İçel in 1571. The story of population movements in Anatolia during the 16th and 17th centuries is a fascinating and at times grim one. Briefly, inflation became rampant and taxes became exorbitant. The Celâli rebellions, risings of rootless rebels, made life unbearable in many localities, rising to a climax between the years 1603 and 1608 when it is estimated that fully two thirds of the population of Anatolia fled their homes, in many cases leaving behind their animals – and things have to be very bad indeed for farmers to move without their animals. In this process, there were many losers and some long term winners, amongst them the Menemencis. Cilicia, the then remote province they moved to, was almost only in name part of the Ottoman Empire and thus ideal for a tough tribal grouping with a strong tendency to independence. Karaisalı, the area and future town they moved into, had originally been named after the Karaisalı – literally, 'Black Jesus' – Turcoman tribe

which had settled there in the 13th century, and which, like many others, had become too settled or, if you prefer, too civilised, or too soft, for their own good, and were destroyed by the Celâli risings. Their loss was the Menemencis' gain. But as the chronicle shows, it was also the gain of many others who came to them for protection. There are at times distinct similarities with Mario Puzo's description in his best-seller *The Godfather* about how their power grew with their ability to offer protection.

By way of illustration, here is my translation of a section of the chronicle describing events early in the 18th century, when central Ottoman rule faded and gave impetus to the growth in power of the Derebeys:

"In the year 1120 (1708) when Adana had been attached to the province of Konya and was under the governance of Çerkesi Hama Paşa, the Topallı section of the Dündarlı tribe had become very numerous. They spent their time staging holdups and spilling blood. In one year they killed forty business travellers and others, including several men of religion and other worthies. They got so carried away that they even killed an official sent from the Sultan's government to oversee their exile to a far-off place."

"When a decision was finally made in accordance with the will of God and the requirements of justice, an Imperial order was sent to Çerkesi Hama Paşa to exile this tribe by force. The Paşa in turn summoned our fourth generation ancestor Habib Çelebi and informed him of the Sultan's order. He was in the habit of passing onto him tasks which strained his own capabilities such as this. Habib Çelebi, from whom he requested the punishment of the Dündarlı, was a brave-hearted man and he immediately gathered about him fighters and warriors from his tribe. He fell upon the Dündarlı tribe and considerable fighting took place. In the end, the Dündarlı were routed. The head of Gedik Süleyman from among their leading figures and the heads of five or six others, who had been killed in the fighting, were cut off and sent to Hama Paşa."

"The patriarch of the Topaloğlu tribe, part of the Dündarlı, fled with some of his supporters and took refuge in Karapınar. Habib Çelebi again fell upon them. Although the population of the Kozan mountain tried to help the Dündarlı, Habib Çelebi captured alive the Topaloğlu tribe patriarch and six of his retainers. He was leading them back when he found that the Kozan people had cut off his route. He then killed all his prisoners and fought his way through the people blocking his way. He brought the severed heads of the prisoners he had had killed to Adana and sent them to Konya to the Governor Paşa."

"In view of the evil that the bandits had been responsible for, added to the fact that he had driven them away from preying on travellers and the poor and in so doing had rendered a signal service, and in order that there should be no return to banditry, the Paşa then assigned the governance of those parts to Habib Çelebi. As soon as he took up his duties, the grateful population of Adana presented him with a petition bearing some 70 or 80 seals. It is a very worn document today, but I still have it in my possession."

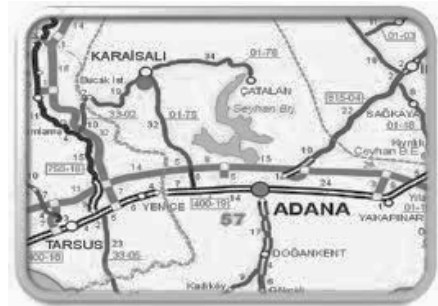
This was a continuing process. Here is Ahmed Bey's summing up of how his father, who had succeeded to the Lordship of the Valley in 1776, attracted followers: "He dispassionately brought down all who were inclined to brigandage, and as he did so my father's fame spread and as time went on he acquired rather a good name for himself. (As a result) many households moved and joined our tribe from İçel and other places. The tribe thus became broader-based, stronger and more numerous."

On the other hand, it was not always like this. As elsewhere, divisions between town and country grew, with the urban population of Adana increasingly hostile to rural Derebeys. In the 1760s the then Menemenci Derebey had gone blind, and enemies in Adana had taken advantage of this and inflicted considerable damage on the tribe. When his son Boz Osman – *Boz* meaning grey, as in *Bozkurt* or 'Grey Wolf' – succeeded him, he extracted revenge, which in turn led the burghers of Adana in 1776 to demand Boz Osman's death from Çelik Mehmed Paşa, the Governor of Adana. The description in the

chronicle has some similarities, if this is not too far-fetched or indeed blasphemous, with Pontius Pilate's interview with Jesus Christ before the Crucifixion:

“The Governor gave a safe conduct and summoned Boz Osman. He found all kinds of courage and open-heartedness written on his forehead, and understood that here was a person that one found only rarely under the blue skies. An affection was born, he did not want him to be hanged by accusing words. But the local populace made many promises of money to come, and petitioned for his hanging. The Governor tried to get him to escape by many hints and subtle warnings, but Osman Bey's manhood and courage made him ashamed to flee. In the event, as it did not suit the Paşa's business interests to deny them their wish, he was forced to have his hanging carried out. What actually happened was that his prison cell was left unlocked, but Boz Osman was too proud to push the door open and sneak away, so he was still there when the hangman came in the morning.”

This up-and-down unpredictability recurs more than once in the history of the Menemencis. I don't propose to take you through the endless story of tribal conflicts, of alliances and re-alliances, but it is sufficient to say that good times were often, and unexpectedly, succeeded by bad times, and great wealth by financial hardship. Clearly, the uncertainties of Cilician life necessitated a tribal fortress cum bolthole for security and indeed survival when things got tough. At some time during the 18th century the Menemencis acquired the ideal bolthole in Milvan Kalesi, the almost inaccessible but surprisingly large old Armenian/Byzantine castle of Milvan high up the Taurus Mountains. Milvan was to save many of their lives from tribal rivals in 1800, while in 1815 it enabled them to beat off and defeat the first serious Ottoman threat to their power. The village of Milvan is 19 kilometres northwest of Karaisalı. Today, it is more frequently called Kale Köy or castle village. The castle of Milvan itself is, however, a good three hours climb from the village, part of it up the almost vertical west face up to the peak at 1900 metres. Milvan castle is on the east bank of the Çakıt Suyu River and commands the Çakıt vale, which is of considerable strategic importance as a link through the Taurus Mountains from Pozantı to the Cilician plain. It provides an alternative to the Cilician Gates, which link Tarsus to Pozantı, and was the route preferred by German railway engineers working on the Baghdad Railway at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, it is still not user-friendly to motor vehicles, and there is an old pack-animal trail still in use between Karaisalı and Pozantı.



The other great essential was a *yayla*: a cool mountain pasture for the unbearably hot summer months on the Cilician plain. Here is the description of this climatic phenomenon given by Captain A.F. Townshend in his book *A Military Consul in Turkey*, published in 1910: “One naturally expects heat in Arabia and on the shores of the Red Sea, and one is not disappointed: but on the coast of Southern Asia Minor, and especially on the Cilician Plain, the heat is also most oppressive from June to September. I well remember one of the first nights I spent in Adana; the temperature of my bedroom at midnight was 103 degrees, the door and two windows being wide open; that was in August, when the heat of the Cilician Plain is very much the same as that of Cairo, but infinitely more trying owing to the dampness... In the mountains of Asia Minor at a height of even 2500 or 3000 feet, the climate is almost perfect in the summer, and the nights, always cool, brace one up after the heat of the day... Even so short a distance into the interior makes a vast difference. When the people at some southern seaport, such as Mersina (Mersin) or Alexandretta (İskenderun), are sitting on the shady side of the cafés,

discussing the latest items of political news brought by a recently arrived steamer, they can see the mountains not ten miles away to the north and north-east where the villages are still clearing the snow from their doors and sitting over huge fires of pine logs. There is an enormous influx of people from the mountain districts to the coast towns in October.” The Menemenci tribe’s *yayla* was Kızıldağ, 29 kilometres from Karaisalı, although the family’s own summer houses were even further up for safety reasons.

To be continued in Review No 22



International symposium on

“The Making of Modern Ankara: Space, Politics, Representation”

at the University of Westminster on 23 November 2012

This was an interesting and unusual event convened by Dr Davide Deriu of the Architecture Research Group at the University of Westminster in conjunction with SOAS Seminars on Turkey. It was evidently inspired by Dr Deriu’s two years spent teaching at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara and the contacts he had established there

Created out of a small Anatolian town as the capital of a new nation state in the 1920s, Ankara is a city whose planning and design represent in a highly self-conscious way what the new state aspired to be. Yet in his opening remarks Dr Deriu commented that it is a city that has no clear visual identity outside Turkey. Within Turkey, he noted, there is a growing interest in the Ankara phenomenon both at the academic level and in terms of public exhibitions. He cited the remark of the leading Turkish architectural historian Sibel Bozdoğan that “Republican Ankara in the 1930s was one of the earliest manifestations of the historical alliance of modernism with nation building and state power”.²⁷

There is not space here to summarize all the papers presented at the symposium, which were not, in any case, all equally central to the topic. Dr Elvan Altan Ergut (METU) focused on the development of Bankalar Caddesi (Banks Street) in the Ulus district, coinciding with the transfer of the headquarters of existing banks from Istanbul to Ankara and the founding of several new national banks. Davide Deriu himself, in a paper entitled ‘The journey to Ankara: ‘New Turkey’ in Western imagination’, analysed some of the writings of the many Western travellers who were drawn to the new Turkish capital (largely built by Austrian and German architects) in the 1920s and 30s. His conclusion was that this symbol of modernity and nationalism posed a challenge to the Western system of knowledge about the Orient, which, as described by Edward Said, perceived it as a homogeneous entity, incapable of progress). Melania Savino (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence), in a paper entitled ‘The display of the ancient past in modern Ankara’, emphasised the importance attached by the Republic, from its earliest days, to archaeology within the context of

²⁷ Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and nation building: Turkish architectural culture in the early republic*. University of Washington Press, 2001, p. 5.

the nation-building project. She gave an account of the various sites in Ankara that were used to display antiquities before the decision was taken, in the 1930s, to devote an entire museum to the newly discovered Hittite artefacts that had been given particular significance by the Turkish History Thesis. The paper by Dr Zeynep Kezer (University of Newcastle), 'Ankara: an archaeology of unremembered histories' addressed 'archaeology' of a quite different, metaphorical kind. In stark contrast to the official "narrative of national unity" towards which, as Ms Savino had shown, early republican archaeological and museological efforts had been directed, Dr Kezer unearthed some of the local realities behind the 'fiction of ethnic homogeneity' promoted by the republican government. She illustrated how a substantial portion of the new development in Ankara occurred on land that had been seized from the expelled Armenian and Greek communities, and how physical traces of their existence, including none other than the mansion in Çankaya that became the presidential residence, were 'appropriated and reinscribed ... with new uses and meanings'.

What I missed in this symposium was a clear visual focus on the architecture itself. What prompted the dramatic switch in the 1930s from the neo-Ottoman 'National Architectural Renaissance' to unashamedly Western modernism? Even the accompanying photographic exhibition brought over from Ankara gave no insight into this.

Celia Kerslake



WHY TURKEY? - A REFLECTION...

by Sally Mustoe
Journalist and Broadcaster

My first BBC broadcast about Turkey was a half-hour programme on Istanbul in the mid-60s. I had driven to Beirut with two female friends in a wood-trimmed Austin A40 in 1963, travelling through Western Europe and arriving in Izmir by boat from Piraeus. Our introduction to the kindness of Turkish people came when we had a puncture as we drove in southern Turkey. Farmworkers changed the tyre, showing amusement at our predicament and refusing to accept the cigarettes we offered. We were back in Turkey after visiting some of the Arab states, going to Ankara and then to Istanbul where I began my long love affair with this magical city before driving back to England. Back in London, I talked to one of the BBC editors who then commissioned my programme.

My previous work had been as a news and current affairs journalist, much of it for the World Service. Over the years since, I have often written and – particularly – broadcast about Istanbul and Turkey. Early on the International Lions were very helpful in putting me in touch with senior lawyers, academics and women in the arts and business for Woman's Hour. Abdi İpekçi and Sami Cohen and my good friends Charles Adelsen and Henry Angelo-Castrillon helped with other radio interviews including a feature on the everyday life of children. My work varied from an interview on a plane from Ankara to Istanbul with the Minister for Agriculture about 'teaching farms' (there were only seven

then, with many Arab students) to a feature on Children's Day in April - when I learned about free theatre tickets for schoolchildren and their experiences when they take over Parliament, acting as MPs, Speaker etc. for that day.

I recorded part of a wonderful presentation by famous entertainers such as old-stager Zeki Müren and Parla Şenol (the young Turkish Shirley Temple) at the press reception in the ruins that later became the Çırağan Hotel. When that hotel opened some years later, the Canadian couple who handled the publicity were pleased with my reactions and those of other foreign and Turkish journalists. Whilst appreciating the Çırağan's architecture and its cuisine and atmosphere generally, the Divan Hotel is still my favourite. I was also in Istanbul when TRT Turkish Television was launched and I enjoyed meeting the charmingly eccentric Professor İzmit Giritli and his tall beautiful assistant on the afternoons when the first transmissions were shown.

Shortly afterwards, I went south to the International Festival of Folk Music which rivalled the famous Llangollen Eisteddfod gathering in Wales. Then back to Istanbul where I was staying at the Carlton Hotel on the Kilyos road with my two small children (now 40!). I put my Uher tape recorder (good sound quality but it was the size of a modern laptop!) on the windowsill to record Tülin Korman, Tülay German and many other superstars serenading senior Turkish naval officers in their magnificent uniforms. I recall that it was about this time that I started my own World Music series on the BBC.

While staying with friends from Istanbul in their summer house in Köyceğiz (Muğla), I met a Dutch television crew with whom I later worked on features about Istanbul's fashion, jewellery and cultural tourism.

I have always found Turkish people's curiosity interesting. Questions have been probing and personal but never rude as I noted particularly on one visit in the early 1980s. The thirteen teenagers who won the Turkish Government's international competition for essays, poems and drawings on the theme 'Modern Turkey founded by Atatürk' came from Belgium, Britain, France, Pakistan and Tunisia. A journalist and a diplomat from each country were invited to join the tour and I was asked to represent Britain. Over ten days, we were feted in Izmir, Gümüldür, Kuşadası, Çeşme, Selçuk and in Ephesus, Ankara and Istanbul. We met State Governors and Ministers of State. The Istanbul Journalists' Association gave a reception for us and we were frequently interviewed on radio and television and for national and local papers. I am sure we all appreciated the gold medallions we were given with the Hittite symbol on the front and each inscribed 'Presented to by Prime Minister Bülent Ulusu' on the reverse. I was upset when mine was stolen in a burglary a couple of years ago but I still have the accompanying booklet given to us; it has many photographs and cartoons illustrating the 'quotes'.

More recently, I was able to expand on my love of Istanbul, particularly the Bosphorus and the constantly busy ferries, in a radio discussion with Professor Norman Stone who was promoting the pleasures of Ankara. A couple of months later, I was also on a very mixed panel talking about different modes of travel where I explained my preference for travelling alone – because people talk to you and you are not diverted from enjoying the scenery or new things by a companion. I have met all sorts of Turkish people over the years, students anxious to practise their English, people who have relatives working in England, even people who are just curious about someone else's country and I've learned so much from them about local lesser-known places.

My most vivid memory of this latest trip was the work of the young pastry chef at the Limak Hotel in Yalova T(h)ermal. İskender Erdoğan produces an extraordinarily wide choice of delicious Turkish desserts, most based on variations of the mouth-watering *baklava*/sponge/milk range. Relishing pastries may not seem the most sensible reason for enjoying the Limak - which is rapidly establishing itself as the best spa hotel in one of Atatürk's favourite places to relax. I decided to have some soup after I had paid my bill and was waiting for my taxi to the ferry but was told "no charge" when I tried to pay for it!

A couple of other incidents at that time help to illustrate why I keep going back to Turkey. There are several new big developments enlarging the village of Gökçedere near Termal but the people have not changed. I stopped to smell a rose in a front garden and the elderly owner brought me some freshly-picked vegetables. One of the stallholders in the small roadside market presented me with a beautiful red rose when I bought some figs from her. On an earlier occasion, I appreciated the coat offered to me by a restaurateur when I went to Kilyos with some Turkish journalists. It was a bright sunny day so we wanted to sit outside but it was cold. He provided cigarettes, explaining that he did not sell them. Yet again, helpful staff in one of the fish restaurants under the Galata Bridge sent a boy to get my ferry ticket when I realized I was enjoying my lunch too much and would have to rush to catch the boat. The restaurant owner was telling me about trees near his Lake Van home and I told him the trees are the main reason I go to Yalova Termal.



Whilst I was staying with Belma Ötüş-Baskett (Editor of *TAS Review* from 2003-7) on this visit, our excellent lunch in her local Moda Club included little parcels of very delicately flavoured *börek* and, elsewhere, I enjoyed warm *sigara baklava* which I had never had before. My continuing appreciation of Turkish food in general is reflected in *Turkish Cookery* which I edited a few years ago, with profits going to help children whose parents were killed in the most recent earthquake. This beautifully illustrated Saqi publication is still selling.²⁸

On what may be my fiftieth visit to Turkey I became aware of so many changes over the years. I miss the street vendors calling their wares and there is too much traffic but I am still a fan and the magic remains for me even though some of my Turkish friends say that they no longer like this enchanting and enchanted city. This most recent trip started with something that has never happened before in all my years of travelling hither and thither: I took the wrong suitcase off the carousel at Istanbul's Atatürk Airport. My excuse was that I had borrowed one as I deemed my own to be too large for just twelve days. Both cases were blue-grey with lots of zips and I discovered the mistake when I arrived at the And Hotel, recommended by Gamon McLellan (regular contributor to the *Review* on Turkish Politics), near the Yerebatan cistern. Fortunately, the exchange was effected easily when a good friend, the photographer Naim Kula, took me back to the airport.

I have never liked cigarette smoke near food so I regretted that smokers ignored restrictions on the restaurant forecourt of the And as indeed they did in the traditional restaurant Hacı Baba on İstiklâl Caddesi and on the ferry to the Princes Islands. On the

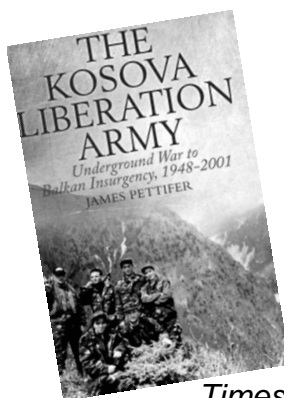
²⁸ Sally Mustoe (Ed.), *Turkish Cookery*, 2006, Saqi Books, 200p, ISBN 9780863560729

boat from the mainland a group of women entertained the passengers by singing and ululating. This was one of the many occasions when I was sorry that I no longer own a tape-recorder as I have always thought that sounds are more evocative than photographs.

This trip did produce one memorably sad note when I learned of the death of my oldest Turkish friend Adnan. We met when we were bathing in the pool at Pamukkale forty-nine years ago. This attractive young man's English was not very good when he tried to talk to us then but we understood the offer he made when he saw our little car as we were preparing to leave. His driver Ali was sitting in his long black car but we politely rejected Adnan's offer to take some of our luggage and one of our trio as we were all going to Konya. We had only been driving briefly when we came to a crossroads blocked by Adnan's car. He came over to us holding a big bunch of newly-washed grapes and, leaning into the window where I was driving, said "I not bad man". He took us to a relative's wedding where the young men, students at MIT, demonstrated folk dances and four young women wore beautifully embroidered and beaded wedding dresses loaned by an uncle who was a museum curator. On our way back we met Adnan's wife and children in Istanbul – I have often met them and other relatives since then.

On my most recent flight home, as I reflected on events over nearly half a century, Turkish Airlines could not spoil my trip by putting me in the worst seat on the plane with no room for my laptop and where passengers and staff brushed against me or squeezed past frequently. The Turkish choreographer Mehmet Sander was sitting next to me and objected to the situation too but he was more constructive, spreading out his baggage to stop any more disturbance!

Book Reviews & Publications



The Kosova Liberation Army

**Underground War to
Balkan Insurgency, 1948 – 2001**

by James Pettifer

Hurst & Company, London, 2012, 256 pp.

James Pettifer has been writing and speaking about the Balkans for decades. During the war in the Balkans he reported for *The Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. His published articles stood out for their excellent structure and strong line of argument. He spoke and wrote with

unprecedented clarity and authority, qualities that few writers who claim to be recognized academic authorities on Balkan issues share. However, in his latest book, a result of thorough but yet incomplete research about the phenomenon of the Kosova Liberation Army, Pettifer is uncharacteristically slow to get to his customary levels of insightfulness.

In the first part of the book, he expresses his gratitude to the people who gave him undoubtedly unique access to the primary sources he needed (which other historians can only dream about). Pettifer was in the privileged position to meet not only the most intriguing participants of the events in Kosova (1992-1999) but also the main characters of his book. Ramush Haradinaj took him on tour on Dukadjini battle sites and Hashim Tachi, former Prime Minister of Kosova, had been trying to encourage the author to write a biography of Adem Jashari, one of the KLA's founders. Pettifer also had close encounters with Valon Murati, Adem Demaci, Xhevdet Shehu and Agim Ceku, as well as representatives of the older generation of Kosova insurgents such as Gani Perolli and Zijadin Qira.

Some might claim that his work is conditioned by that fact the author developed close connections with KLA members, as well with the contemporary Albanian elite. But the big question is whether this book substantially covers a highly controversial subject or did Pettifer fall into the hidden trap - notoriously common to all historians who spend decades researching the same subject, in this case the Balkan vortex – of getting too close to the subject of his research? Or is the author simply not showing all the cards in his hand, carefully waiting for future developments, for the KLA to continue with their work, in a secretive or less secretive way, leading to another crisis in the region. Hence, maybe Pettifer is simply keeping the material for his next book! Indeed, in the last chapter and the epilogue he gives a hint at how he is expecting the next act of the Balkan drama to unfold. “Thus, the conspiracy becomes the history and escapes the fictional.” (p 254)

At the very beginning, Pettifer highlights that “Serbs mostly saw the Kosova Liberation Army as a conspiracy against their country” and one of the main issues in the book is whether this is true. Is it, as Pettifer says; “in a certain sense an account of secretive political conspiracy, as opposed to mainstream historiography, which sees the Kosova Albanian struggle as an enterprise founded on human rights and the Helsinki Final Act provisions for national self-determination” (p1). “In Kosova, both the Ottoman Empire and the first and second Yugoslavia, secrecy and underground military planning were essential for rebels throughout the years of Kosova Albanian resistance to the Ottoman Empire, and then the Royal Yugoslavia and Titoism, long before the KLA campaign opened after 1993. Secret conspiracy was in the blood of the Albanian majority population as much as growing aubergines”. (p4)

Milošević's government saw the KLA exclusively as ‘a conspiracy against the legal order’, like the flare up of civil war in other parts of the former Yugoslavia. At this point, it seems that the conspiracy theories regarding the KLA's creation, origins and activities, are not only the result of Milošević's propaganda. Pettifer provides the reader with very substantial information confirming that the KLA was a secret, conspiratorial organization, directly targeting Serbs, with the long standing goal of achieving an independent, autonomous Kosova and then starting insurgencies in Macedonia and Serbia proper - hence getting quite close to fulfilling the Great

Albania project. The question, which the author didn't raise, is where the center of the future KLA Albania would be, Pristina or Tirana? Pettifer has some problems articulating this issue in a clear and open way. This said, he does provide the reader with numerous examples and arguments exposing the true nature of not only the KLA movement but also of Kosova Albanian culture, at least seen from his own perspective: "In Albanian culture, the issue of revenge, to kill a policeman was to draw blood in the revenge process, an attractive opportunity to regain the honor under the dictates of the Kanun code which is ethical basis of the Albanian family. It provided a status of instant honor to the revenging Albanian and elevation to a leadership position in the local community".(p85) According this statement, all prominent KLA figures, that Pettifer met had drawn blood and killed a Serb or more..."(p70) The author sees no ethical controversy when stating: "Young Albanian fighters were killing their first Serbs, taking the life of 'The Others' and in doing so removing whatever little remained of the heritage of Yugoslavia from within themselves"(p89)

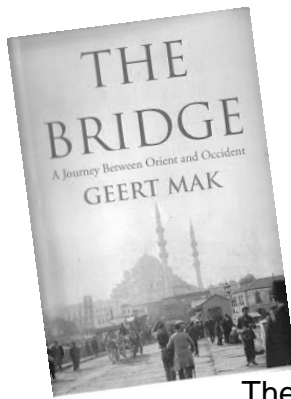
What about other Albanians who were part of the Rugova circle, or just ordinary people focused on living their own lives, trying to survive in the circumstances of utmost difficulty, and living under the oppressive Milošević regime? They had an additional grave concern that, if war should start, and in its full scope envelope the whole of Kosova, how to escape from Srebrenica-type massacres?

Pettifer is very critical when describing Rugova, not just as a political figure, but by dismissing the achievements of his peaceful politics. He totally discards even his biggest achievement of all – not starting an open war against Serbs at a time when the whole of former Yugoslavia was in flames (1991–1995). Rugova pre-empted Serbs keeping any Kosova territory. Moreover Kosova Albanian civilian casualties were much lower, compared to losses in Bosnia. From an initial estimate of Albanian atrocities accounting for some 100,000, under KFOR auspice's the figures proved to be substantially smaller (about 12,000). Hence the Rugova style of politics pre-empted a complete exodus of Albanians from Kosova.

Although we cannot say that this book represents a comprehensive and entirely objective overview of the political, historical and military role of the KLA up to 2001, it certainly gives an enriching amount of rather surprising information. For example, the IRA, was considered as one of the potential role models for the KLA. Definitely Pettifer's work presents an unrivalled command of the sources on the Albanian reality. Although it isn't likely that any Western scholar could match this work in the near future, it may well be that Pettifer will produce a similar work – especially if another crisis in the Balkans regains the media attention.

Maja Milkovic Hoare





The Bridge

by Geert Mak

Random House UK, 2010, 160pp.
ISBN-10:009953214X; ISBN-13: 978-0099532149.



The Galata Bridge is one of the more obvious metaphors for all those oppositions that Istanbul is famously caught between: Occident and Orient; east and west; tradition and modernity. The half-kilometre stretch across the Golden Horn connects the ‘historic’ old Stamboul – with the Imperial mosques, palaces and bazaars – to the ‘modern’ Galata and Pera – originally settled by Genoese merchants and later the quarter of European ambassadors, diplomats, traders and artists. Geert Mak roamed the entire European continent for his impressionistic 2004 travelogue *In Europe* but this book offers a complete contrast in terms of scale.

As Mak himself wryly states, “*The Bridge* is a travelogue covering 490 metres”, his focus having infinitely narrowed to one bridge, in one corner of the old continent. The book is subtitled *A Journey between Orient and Occident*, but I suspect that’s a marketing decision from the publisher, rather than from the author. Mak is wise to the cliché, and he makes sure not to labour it. Instead, his book mainly focuses on the vicissitudes of today’s bridge-dwellers and in this it is a triumph of understated sensitivity.

Over the years a total of five bridges have been built on the site: two wooden, two iron, and one (today’s) concrete (“not a pretty sight”, Mak laconically observes). Istanbul, he says, “is a classic city [...] poverty has pitched its tent in the heart of the old city, the middle classes, ring after ring, live further and further away from [it]”. As the city’s breakneck modernisation continues apace, this old arrangement is coming under increasing pressure, but it still largely holds true. In many senses, the Galata Bridge is the centre of this pitched tent, and much of the book concerns itself with giving the reader a vivid sense of the consequences that an urban hand-to-mouth existence, or ‘an economy of spare change’, has on the bridge’s denizens. “The lives of the tea seller, the cigarette boys and the insole vendor are set against the backdrop of a remarkable corner of the globe, but precious little good that does them”, Mak suggests.

Anyone who’s crossed the Galata Bridge recently, or got trapped in those underground shopping tunnels that take you (inefficiently) across the roads on either side, will at least be familiar with the sights described in the book. Those knock-off children’s action figurines crawling mechanically in the lids of cardboard boxes; the fake perfumes; fake mobile phones; the cheap sets of pens; the cheap tea; cheap shoes; jeans; umbrellas; insoles; shoelaces; smuggled cigarettes; condoms. I doubt anyone has stopped to take such an interest in the people behind these items as Mak though, and this is where his book is a revelation. We are introduced to the drifters selling those petty goods, as well as the indefatigable fisherman dangling rods (with steadily diminishing returns) over the bridge’s rails, lottery ticket sellers,

glue-sniffers, pickpockets. Most are displaced migrants, having come to Istanbul from somewhere in the east of the country, perhaps from a village now deserted, or just one that simply can't support them anymore. This mass of rootless internal migrants makes up an ever increasing proportion of Istanbul's uncontrollably booming population, and Mak gets most of his material by simply mining them for stories, painting an authentic picture of the bridge's unique fauna. He lets the people he meets on the bridge talk about their backgrounds, their daily routine, the starkness of their prospects, the financial knife-edge that a living scraped by selling umbrellas entails, the psychological contortions required to maintain some personal sense of dignity or honour. As one man (and this is a resolutely male landscape) says: "Everyone here, almost all of us come from the back of beyond [...] But there's nothing there for us. Unless you want to go into the mountains, to join the terrorists. If you don't want to do that, you have no choice but to make the best of things here, to sell tea, or flog pirated CDs, or shift stolen mobile phones, or sell fake perfume..." Almost all harbour dreams of migrating to Europe. One of the umbrella sellers once tried to smuggle himself into London, but was detected by the immigration authorities at Heathrow and sent back to Turkey and now dreams of suing Britain.

The narrative is divided between these personal ruminations and more widescreen historical vignettes, which elegantly sketch the background that has shaped the way the bridge – and the city itself – have come to be the way they are today. Mak vividly describes the historical, Ottoman Istanbul, a city of all creeds, of Christians, Jews and Muslims. It was, he says, "perhaps the most multicultural city of all time", but at the same time it was run according to strictly defined lines of demarcation: Istanbul "consisted of communities that worked and did business together, but were otherwise imprisoned in their own compartments of neighbourhood, house, family, gender, rank and standing [...] all these peoples and cultures inhabited worlds of their own. The city's tolerance depended on looking the other way; contact with those other worlds was devoid of all curiosity." Interestingly – and perhaps a little fancifully – Mak finds some kind of continuity between those historical hidden lines of division and modern ones constructed by the displaced internal migrant drifters. "The bridge", Mak says, "has its own intricate sociology of 'economic compartmentalisation'. Countless tightly knit immigrant communities exist in this way, all of them operating in isolation from the others and within the strict borders allotted them [...]. The fishmongers all hail from the eastern city of Erzincan. Most of the professional anglers come from Trabzon on the Black Sea. The rods and tackle, on the other hand, are sold generally by immigrants from Kastamonu [...]. And if you're Kurdish there is no sense in trying to rent a space and fry fish, for that monopoly is in the hands of another group."

Mak is never boring, but he is on less sure ground when trying to chart a course through the city's modern political situation. One pages-long section in particular – attempting to unknot the delicate 'headscarf question' with rather platitudinous observations – feels too deliberate, like a hunk of meat thrown only because he knows the audience back in western Europe is interested in these things.

Describing the brutal realities of a life spent in perpetual, unbreakable poverty, it would be easy to slip into mawkishness, but Mak never does. This is an admirably warm-spirited, well-judged book. It's occasionally lyrical, but never patronises or succumbs to sentimentality. Mak spent his time on the bridge wisely, observing and talking to the people he found, always with an eye on the history that has formed the

city. He pulls off a smart trick: by focusing on a small geographical area and a limited cast of characters, Mak gives us a convincing, holistic portrait of a wider society, and its conflicted place in history.

William Armstrong



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Değirmenci, Koray. *Creating Global Music in Turkey*. (Lexington Books: 2013). ISBN-10: 0739175459

Dönmez, Gönül. *The Routledge Dictionary of Turkish Cinema*. (Routledge: 2013). ISBN-10: 0415666260

Pippidi, Andrei. *Visions of the Ottoman World in Renaissance Europe (Columbia/Hurst)* (Columbia University Press: 2013). ISBN-10: 0231703783

Riefstahl, Rudolf M. *Early Turkish Tile Revetments in Edirne: Ars Islamica, V4, 1937* (Literary Licencing LLC: 2013). ISBN-10: 1258558491

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Dusinberre, Elspeth R.M. *Empire, Authority, and Autonomy in Achaemenid Anatolia*. (Cambridge University Press: 2013). ISBN-10: 1107018269

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LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Smith, Paul. *Turkish and Urdu Sufi Poets*. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: 2013). ISBN-10: 148238003X

POLITICS AND SOCIOLOGY

Aldıkaçtı Marshall, Gül. *Shaping Gender Policy in Turkey: Grassroots Women Activists, the European Union and the Turkish State*. (State University of New York Press: 2013). ISBN-10: 143844771X

Bayır, Derya. *Minorities and Nationalism in Turkish Law (Cultural Diversity and Law)*. (Ashgate Pub Co: 2013). ISBN-10: 1409420078

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Compiled by Arın Bayraktaroğlu



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Members and subscribers of the *Review* are reminded that subscriptions for 2013 were due on 1 January 2013 and it would be appreciated if payment could be made without the need to send reminders. The current rates can be found in this *Review* (facing page 55) or on the website.

Members and subscribers are also reminded that we have a website where there is information about past and future TASG events and details of subscriptions rates as well as a 'contact us' facility, which can be used, for example, to notify a change of address, or give us an email contact address, or request extra copies of the *Review*.

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Please give details of any particular interests in, or connections with, Turkey or Turkish Studies which you have. This information will help TASG to cater for members' interests.

For any communication please take advantage of our website address
www.tasg.org.uk or our email attached to it: **info@tasg.org.uk**

Please return to:

Mr Keith Bowtell, Treasurer, TASG
Stanton Lodge, Shelveys Way
Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5QJ

STOP PRESS:

We need ideas for a design for the covers of our next issue, No 22, which will mark the 90th Anniversary of the Republic of Turkey. Please let us have suggestions of attractive images, designs or catchy phrases!

To join the
Turkish Area Study Group

Either Go to the Website www.tasg.org.uk

Or email the Administrative Secretary
Mr Stephen Parkin – snjp@btinternet.com
and ask for an application form

HELP!

The Turkish Area Studies *Review* is in search of editorial help. We would like to hear soon from friends of TASG who might contribute to the compilation, editing, and/or production of this well-received publication. Anyone who would like to know more about working with the Editorial Team is invited to contact
Brian Beeley (bw.beeley@gmail.com) **OR**
Sigi Martin (sigimartin@hotmail.com)

Request for contributions

TAS *Review* welcomes articles, features, reviews, announcements and news from private individuals as well as those representing universities and other relevant institutions. Submissions may range from 250 to 2500 words and should be written in A4 format or, preferably, sent electronically to the Co-Editors at bw.beeley@gmail.com and/or sigimartin@hotmail.com. Submissions for the Autumn issue would be particularly welcomed by 31 July 2013.

TURKISH AREA STUDY GROUP

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