

Turkish Area Studies Review

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The 2019 John Martin Lecture

Friday 22 November 2019 at 6.30 pm

Diana Darke

Middle East Expert and Author

on

**Turkey and Syria:
deep past connections, deep present differences**

in

**The Tuke Common Room, Regent's University,
Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS**

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Spring Symposium 2020

2 May 2020

at Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Details will follow (see also www.batas.org.uk for more information)



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Editorial

Since the Spring 2019 issue (No 33) of this *Review*, Turkey has experienced noteworthy events of a political nature. One of these was the repeat local elections in Istanbul on 23 June when the ruling alliance lost not only the mayoral race to the opposition alliance by a significant margin but also its reign in Istanbul of 25 years. Another significant event is the military operation in north Syria launched by Turkey on 9 October to protect its south-east border which has invited a wide-spread international opposition. Both these events are analysed in detail by David Barchard in his coverage of Turkish politics in this issue.

As usual we have a wide-ranging variety of contributions offering information, insight, and constructive criticism. Apart from David Barchard's penetrating analysis we have, for example, a glimpse into late Ottoman Aleppo through British eyes and a review of Turkey's nuclear energy programme and its pitfalls. Our Spring Symposium in Cambridge generated, as usual, very diverse contributions ranging from the 'extraordinary life' of Hannah (Fatima) Robinson in late Ottoman Istanbul, through Islamist perceptions of 'civilisation' to literature reflecting the 'spirit of Gezi' and, finally, the question of whether journalists are regarded as terrorists in Turkey. Articles on cultural topics include thought-provoking reflections on Talat Halman and his poetry. There are translations of the work of two further poets, four book reviews and an up-to-date and sensitive account of recent travels on the eastern edge of Turkey.

Once again we are very grateful to all our contributors, to our proof-readers and members of the Editorial Board.

To conclude we have a sad piece of news, namely the passing of BATAS's great mentor and inspiration, Professor Clement Dodd, who died peacefully on 18 August at the age of 93 after a period of declining health. Clem, as he was known to his friends and colleagues, was a political scientist who throughout his academic career had specialised on Turkey and latterly Cyprus and published extensively on both countries. He headed the Department of Politics at Hull University from 1970 to 1986 and went on to establish a Modern Turkey Programme at SOAS in his retirement. He was the moving spirit behind the reconstitution of the Turkish Area Study Group (founded at SOAS in the 1980s by Dr Margaret Bainbridge) as an association in 1990, and served on the Council of TASG (renamed BATAS in 2013) from 1990 until 2014, becoming Vice-President in 2010. We will devote a special section of the next issue of *TAS Review* to Clem's life and achievements and his constantly ambitious vision for the future of Turkish studies in the UK. He will be greatly missed and fondly remembered. (Any readers who would like to contribute a personal or academic tribute, or to suggest potential contributors who may not be known to us, should please contact the co-editors by the beginning of January.)

Ciğdem Balım
Co-Editor

Sigrid-B Martin
Co-Editor

Turkey's Politics Autumn 2019

David Barchard
Writer on Turkish history and society



A tranquil scene between two upheavals

Generally speaking April to October 2019 was a relatively tranquil phase inside Turkey, but the half year opened and closed with events with far-reaching implications, one transforming Turkey's domestic political scene and the other its international relations.

The 31 March 2019 local elections, according to some, may mark the opening of a final phase of AKP (Justice and Development Party) rule. Then when this bulletin was almost completed, on 9 October Turkey sent troops into the Kurdish autonomous zones of Northern Syria on operation 'Barış Pınarı' ('Peace Spring'). This is set to be the biggest and most momentous military operation it has carried out in Syria so far. Its consequences for the political geography of the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, as well as for Turkey's relations with Europe and the USA, are likely to be far reaching,

1. CHP wins Istanbul metropolis twice

Between April and October, another event of great importance was the resounding second victory of Ekrem İmamoğlu as mayor of Istanbul on 23 June. This transformed the significance of the earlier opposition win in the local elections. In the March elections, though there was a clear swing away from the AKP, the opposition's victories in the biggest cities were fairly narrow. Ekrem İmamoğlu, till then the little-known CHP mayor of Beylikdüzü in Istanbul, emerged initially just 21,462 votes ahead of his AKP rival, the former prime minister Binali Yıldırım. This was less than half a percent of the 8.86 million total votes cast. In Ankara, Mansur Yavaş's victory for the Republican Peoples' Party (CHP) was much less of a surprise, though it was also fairly narrow: just 124,000 votes or 3.7% of those cast.¹ The March elections followed a vituperative campaign with threats against some opposition candidates such as Yavaş. The AKP campaigning was led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan personally and focussed very much on him and his achievements. The president was an energetic and tireless speaker, holding two mass meetings most days across the country.²

Initial reaction to the CHP's startling photofinish victory in Istanbul was not to accept the results there but to try to chip away at them with incessant

¹ Results available at <https://secim.haberler.com/2019/yerel-secimler/ankara-secim-sonuclari/>

² *Daily Sabah*, 30 March 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/elections/2019/03/30/campaign-period-comes-to-end-with-erdogan-outperforming-rivals>

recounts. After five weeks of recounts and fierce (though unsubstantiated) claims of electoral fraud³, the High Election Board, which seems to have been under great pressure, first withdrew the certificate appointing İmamoğlu mayor and then ordered a re-rerun of the election for 23 June.⁴ The second campaign which followed was quieter than expected with both the AKP and CHP fielding the same candidates. President Erdoğan took a less prominent part.⁵ The result was something of a thunderclap. This time, with more or less the same number of voters taking part, a margin of over 800,000 votes separated the winning CHP from the AKP, or slightly under 10%.

What does this portend for Turkey's political future? The initial reaction of AKP and President Erdoğan was calm and democratic. The hurling of serious accusations that had marked the election campaign ceased and the new mayors of the 29 metropolitan municipalities attended a gathering with the President at the presidential palace on 11 September amid slightly nervous joke-making on both sides.⁶

Better prospects for the opposition?

The background however is of a potentially serious future challenge to AKP rule. Control of the country's major cities has rested in the hands of Islamist parties since 1994 but the 2019 elections strongly suggest that the balance between political forces in Turkey is changing.⁷ More specifically it means that despite a quarter of a century of consistent defeats, the opponents of Islamist politics can win in the country's main provinces. However the AKP can draw a good deal of comfort from the fact that recent successes have not triggered any kind of renewal inside the inward-looking CHP, which remains dominated by a clique, accused by its opponents inside the party of excessive dominance by Alevi politicians, and the party does not reach out effectively to potential new voters outside its existing strongholds.

On the face of things, looking at the overall numbers, the AKP is still dominant, but to achieve 50% of the votes it has to rely on its ally, the Nationalist Action Party (MHP). The electoral map of Turkey, which used to show the AKP overwhelmingly dominant, has changed but not totally.⁸ In March the AKP took 44% of the popular vote, i.e. 2 percentage points more votes than in last year's general elections. But its partnership, the 'Peoples'

³ <https://turkey.theglobepost.com/erdogan-istanbul-local-elections/>

⁴ For the recounts and orders for a second election, see <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election-istanbul/turkey-expands-istanbul-vote-recount-after-ruling-party-challenges-losses-idUSKCN1RG159>,

⁵ *Bloomberg News*, 13 June 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-06-13/once-ubiquitous-erdogan-fades-into-shadows-in-istanbul-revote>

⁶ *Daily Sabah*, 11 September 2019, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2019/09/11/president-erdogan-urges-mayors-to-unite-for-interests-of-turkey>

⁷ Detailed election figures for the country and its administrative subdivisions with maps can be viewed at <https://secim.haberler.com/2019/yerel-secimler/> and <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-election/appeals-spark-frustration-as-istanbul-vote-count-enters-third-week-idUSKCN1RR0T8>. The re-run was ordered on 6 May.

⁸ Compare the map for 2014 at <https://secim.haberler.com/2014/> with the map for 2019 at <https://secim.haberler.com/2019/yerel-secimler/>

Alliance' (i.e. the AKP plus the MHP) got 51% of the votes. The central Anatolian hinterland still mostly – though with exceptions – backs the AKP but in many provinces the competition is between the AKP and the MHP. The AKP has thus been helped by the split in the MHP which led to the formation of the Good Party, but in some provinces – for example Kırşehir – the CHP benefited from local rivalries inside the Peoples' Alliance⁹ and fielded a very strong candidate. It could probably achieve similar surprises elsewhere if it worked at energising its provincial organizations.

Losing the metropolises

The main lesson of the local elections is thus that the hold of the AKP in the large cities (which it and its forerunner, the Welfare Party, have held continuously since 1994) has slipped. Turkey is now dominated by its large metropolitan provinces, nine of which have populations of two million and more, and 13 of which have more than a million inhabitants. In March seven of the ten largest cities went to the opposition and the AKP now holds only 15 of the top 30 cities (though it has rectified this situation by dismissing the mayors of three south eastern cities.) In another country this outcome would not have been regarded as very surprising, given that interest rates and inflation were both above 20% at the time of the poll, and matters were compounded by high unemployment, and universally strong popular resentment at the presence of at least 3.6 refugees from the Syrian civil war in Turkey.

The CHP now holds four of the country's top five cities, greatly enhancing its political prestige and removing patronage and economic resources from the AKP. This ranges from jobs, to contracts, and to subventions of various kinds. The loss of Istanbul is also an economic blow. Ekrem İmamoğlu, who is unmistakably already grooming himself for an eventual presidential contest, has removed hundreds¹⁰ of unnecessary official cars, made tender competitions transparent, and ended municipal donations to pious foundations, associations, and brotherhoods totalling TL 357 million (\$60 million) a year.¹¹ But the CHP national leadership's attitude to their new political star remains apparently rather detached – and very likely unenthusiastic.

A return to the parliamentary system?

A second consequence of the municipal election defeats, though so far only a marginal one, has been a revival of opposition calls for a return to the parliamentary system. At present the Grand National Assembly plays a relatively minor role in Turkey's national politics. During the summer there were several calls from the CHP (Republican Peoples Party) and the İYİ Parti (Good Party) for the abandonment of the presidential system introduced last

⁹ *Sözcü*, 3 April 2019, <https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2019/gundem/chp-kirsehiri-nasil-kazandi-4279197/>

¹⁰ Bloomberg News 6 September, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-09-06/money-squandered-anger-as-mayor-claims-erdogan-party-excess>

¹¹ *Gazete Duvar*, 27 August 2019,

<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/politika/2019/08/27/imamoglu-sizin-soramadiginizi-ben-sorayim-iktidara/> İmamoğlu had pledged to do this during his campaign in April.

year after its approval in a referendum in April 2017. The CHP says that it has carried out studies on how such a change could be implemented.¹² Inside the AKP establishment opinion remains firm that a return is not possible. It claims that if another party were ever to take power, it would also not end presidential government.¹³

Removal of three south-eastern mayors

On 19 August it was announced that the mayors of the three largest cities in the southeast, Diyarbakır, Van, and Mardin, had been removed by orders from the minister of the interior.¹⁴ All three belonged to the pro-Kurdish HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) and had been elected with substantial majorities in March. Allegedly they had been engaged in terrorist activity – although at the time of writing no charges have yet been brought against them.¹⁵ All three mayors have been replaced by the governor of their province, who is of course an official from the Ministry of the Interior, and lower echelons of the municipal structure, including councillors and employees, have also been dismissed. There were some immediate international consequences to the dismissals. The EU, which for most of the last few years, has generally been reticent about commenting on democratic and human rights issues in Turkey, spoke out against the removal of the mayors, with its delegation to the Council of Europe issuing a tougher than usual statement on the subject on 4 September. A key paragraph in the statement ran as follows:

While the Turkish government has a legitimate right to fight terrorism, it is also responsible for ensuring this is done transparently and in accordance with the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in its Constitution and Turkey's international commitments. Turkey has to repeal measures inhibiting the functioning of local democracy, in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission and with Turkey's commitment to the European Charter of Local Self-Government.¹⁶

Could more mayors face removal?

The removal of HDP mayors – part of a continuing series of crackdown operations against its officials and members in Eastern Anatolia – naturally produced fears of similar moves against the mayors of Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir, Turkey's three largest cities and all now under CHP mayors. This however is being denied by the government and a drastic step of this sort

¹² *CHP'de parlamenter sisteme dönüş planı*, Cumhuriyet, 2 June 2019, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/988018/CHP_de_parlamente_r_sisteme_donus_plani.html

¹³ *AKP yetkilileri: Parlamenter sisteme dönmek mantık ve sosyolojik olarak mümkün değil*, Cumhuriyet, 28 September 2019, http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/siyaset/1602139/AKP_yetkilileri__Parlamente_r_sisteme_donmek_mantik_ve_sosyolojik_olarak_mumkun_degil.html

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, 20 August 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/08/20/turkey-3-kurdish-mayors-removed-office>

¹⁵ Anatolia Agency, 22 August 2019,

¹⁶ *Local EU Statement on the suspension of elected mayors in south-east Turkey* https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/66937/local-eu-statement-suspension-elected-mayors-south-east-turkey_en

against Ekrem İmamoğlu in Istanbul would be very risky at least at present.¹⁷ However the possibility of measures against the mayor of Istanbul remained in the air. İmamoğlu, whose victory in the re-election in June, dependant to a considerable extent on picking up around a million votes of Kurdish supporters of the PKK, showed that his sights are still on Kurdish voters by making a journey to eastern Anatolia on 31 August.

Originally planned as a trip to a wedding in Batman, İmamoğlu stopped off in Diyarbakir in a show of solidarity for its ousted administration. There he delivered a speech in the local CHP headquarters, criticizing the sackings, and he met the former mayors of the city and Mardin.¹⁸ This evoked sharp criticism from President Erdoğan who said the mayor of Istanbul was ‘hand in hand with people tainted by terrorism.’ The president implied that anyone doing this was unfit to be either a mayor or a politician, comments which were assumed by some opposition papers to be a threat to remove İmamoğlu from office.¹⁹

CHP Party chief in Istanbul facing jail

The triangular relationship between the CHP organization in Istanbul, Kurdish voters, and the defence of the HDP may already have claimed one high profile casualty with the jail sentence passed on the CHP’s party chief in Istanbul, Ms Canan Kaftancıoğlu, who on 6 December was sentenced to nine years and eight months in jail by an Istanbul court for terrorist offences which consisted of tweets, some of them apparently bogus. She is said to have put these out on the Internet seven years ago.²⁰ Ms Kaftancıoğlu’s commitment to support for greater rights for ethnic Kurds is also unpopular with some sections of her own party outside Istanbul. After an earlier session she read out a poem by Nazım Hikmet in protest at the trial, and this was promptly added to the indictment against her. But to date her sentence has not been confirmed and she is still at liberty.



Businessman-human rights campaigner about to complete second year in prison

Meanwhile on 30 September, Osman Kavala, a businessman, philanthropist, and human rights campaigner, and also a graduate of Manchester University, spent his 700th consecutive²¹ day in prison. He, and 15 other people, were

¹⁷ *Turkish Minute*, 22 August 2019, <https://www.turkishminute.com/2019/08/22/erdogan-aide-denies-plans-for-removal-of-istanbul-ankara-mayors/> On 14 October, Süleyman Soylu, Minister of the Interior, avoided a direct answer to a question on the subject telling reporters to wait.

¹⁸ *Evrensel*, 1 September 2019, <https://www.evrensel.net/daily/385868/ekrem-imamoglu-in-diyarbakir-we-will-struggle-together-against-non-democratic-circles>

¹⁹ *Diken.com* 1 September, <http://www.diken.com.tr/erdogan-imamoglu-hedef-aldi-terore-bulasmis-olanlarla-dirsek-temasinda/>

²⁰ *Turkey: Opposition politician sentenced to 9 years in jail*, Deutsche Welle, 6 September 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-opposition-politician-sentenced-to-9-years-in-jail/a-50332570>

²¹ https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/09/osman-kavala-detention-unlawful.html?utm_campaign=20190930&utm_source=sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=Briefly%20Turkey

due to go on trial in the first week of October to face allegations that they conducted a secret plot to overthrow the government by force by staging the Gezi Park demonstrations of May and June 2013. Kavala was directly accused by President Erdoğan of taking funds from the financier George Soros, described by the president as ‘the famous Hungarian Jew’, for a cultural organization. The Kavala case – which has caused some bafflement both inside and outside Turkey given the previously innocuous image of its central figure – has also triggered some statements from the EU, again from its Delegation to the Council of Europe, though not from high level ministers or national politicians.²²

Other Arrests

Throughout the summer the police and other security forces continued to make regular raids and arrests targeted at persons believed to be linked to the Gülenist movement, generally known in Turkey as FETÖ (the Fethullah Terrorist Organization). The total numbers of persons either detained or arrested are staggering. On 23 September, the Minister of the Interior, Süleyman Soylu, disclosed that 33,000 persons have been discharged from the police force alone, equivalent to about one in ten of its officers.²³

2. PKK terrorism and armed conflict inside Turkey

A year ago, I noted that, although the death toll is still persistent and by most international standards rather severe, deaths from PKK terrorism fell sharply during the summer of 2018. The picture of a decline in casualties continues to be generally valid. Using crude indicators of death notices, the number of persons, mostly soldiers and police, but including a few village guards and civilians, who died as a result of terrorist attacks from March to September this year, was 104, compared to 149 in the same period of 2018.²⁴ However the crude aggregates do not reveal the changing nature of the conflict. Whereas a decade ago, many of the casualties were victims of offensive attacks staged by the PKK against police stations, barracks, and similar targets deep inside Turkey, there are currently virtually no attacks of this sort. Instead the conflict with the PKK has shifted to Turkey’s borders with neighbouring countries.

One particular trouble spot is the crossing between Iran/Armenia and Turkey in districts such as İğdır (e.g. Aralık where terrorist groups entering the country regularly clash with forces guarding the border). Another chronic

²² On this and other cases, see *Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest developments on human rights in Turkey*, 21 February 2019, at https://eeas.europa.eu/regions/western-balkans/58532/statement-spokesperson-latest-developments-human-rights-turkey_en and also

EUDEL Statement on human rights in Turkey, 3 July 2019

https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/council-europe/64979/eudel-statement-human-rights-turkey_en

²³ *FETÖ soruşturmaları kapsamında 33 bin kişi emniyetten ihraç edildi*, TRThaber, 23 September 2019; <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/feto-sorusturmaları-kapsamında-33-bin-kisi-emniyetten-ihrac-edildi-432310.html>

²⁴ These figures, taken from death notices, do not distinguish between deaths inside Turkey and in adjoining countries such as Iraq and Syria

trouble spot is Çukurca, the mountain pass valley district of Hakkari, a district close to the Iraqi border which has been the scene of violence for many decades and does not seem to have been fully pacified despite intensive efforts. Violence sometimes strikes simultaneously in both areas. For example, in a single day, 1 June this year, two soldiers died in a clash near İğdir and three in Çukurca.²⁵ However a good many deaths of soldiers have also now occurred across the border inside Iraq or Syria, particularly in the Syrian province of Afrin which Turkish forces captured from a local PKK affiliate in March 2018. Inside Turkey, the mountainous triangle of territory on both sides of the border around Şırnak seems to be one especially fiercely contested area, presumably because it represents the main route through which PKK groups still attempt to enter Turkey.

3. Operations in Iraq and Syria

However the main theatre of the conflict has shifted south of the border to Iraq and Syria. In Iraq, talk of an attack on the PKK bases high on Mount Qandil on the Iraqi border continues, though it is not currently being promised as immediately as it was a year ago. Instead the strategy seems to be to conduct strikes by air, and in some cases on the ground – in the inaccessible valleys which protect the strongholds of the PKK in multiple targets in the areas of Iraq close to the Turkish border.

Turkey launches its fourth major operation in Syria

All these earlier developments, as well as the domestic political contest between the AKP and the opposition, were dwarfed by the launching of cross-border 'East of the Euphrates' operations by the Turkish military into Syria on 9 September. The operations, known as 'Operation Peace Spring' are the fourth Turkish military incursion in Syria, but by far the most significant. They could prove to be the biggest turning point in Turkish international relations since the July 1974 Cyprus operation. Turkey already controls 1.8% of the territory of Syria as a result of its previous operations. The new assault in Syria could cover a much greater expanse of land and aim at bringing down the autonomous mainly Kurdish administration of the PYD, replacing them with a 32 km Safe Zone and beyond that some kind of mainly Sunni Syrian administration, probably answerable to the Syrian National Government, or its replacement, which has existed in exile in Istanbul since 2013.

**OPERATION
PEACE
SPRING**

Turkey versus the Syrian Kurdish PYD

At the start of the incursion in early October, Turkey was already in control of 3,460sq km of Syrian territory, while the Syrian Kurds, following the defeat of the Islamic State, held 50,000 km, or just over a quarter of Syria. Though it never formally announced secession from Syria and rule from Damascus, the Rojava government, centred on Qamishli, just across the border from the Turkish town of Nusaybin, was the nearest approach so far to a Kurdish state (the first since the ill-starred Mahabad Republic in Iran in 1946). The

²⁵ *İğdir ve Hakkari'de hain saldırılar: 5 şehit*, Sabah, 2 June 2016, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2019/06/02/igdir-ve-hakkaride-hain-saldirilar-5-sehit>

administration of this area was rigidly Marxist in style and organization and its political and military organization was directed from the PKK's central command in Iraq, believed to be on Mount Qandil. Despite this ideology, the PYD and its militia – YPG 'Peoples Protection Units' – had very close links with the American forces arising from comradeship engendered by fighting against IS in the Global Coalition. This comradeship between soldiers and commanders is almost certainly the explanation for the support the PYD/YPG has received from senior figures in the Republican Party who listen to US generals and officers in a way that they do not listen to others.

In Ankara's view Operation Peace Spring is not an act of war, but an anti-terrorism exercise. Süleyman Soylu, the Minister of the Interior, says that anyone calling the action war is guilty of treachery.²⁶ Government news refers to towns in the PYD zone as 'nests of terrorism' and combatants as terrorists. However there was a clear military aspect. Before operations began the YPG was believed to have about 30,000 troops, armed and trained by the US during the conflict with the Islamic State²⁷ though this would not have posed a great strategic threat on its own. The fear in Ankara seems to have been that, with US backing, the autonomous districts would evolve towards statehood and international recognition, thereby exerting a strong boost for separatist sentiment inside Turkey itself. The primary goal of proposed operations in northern Syria, first announced several years ago, was therefore to create a 32-km wide 'safe zone' along the border which would prevent possible attacks into Turkey. Since the operation is also pledged to destroy the PYD Kurdish administration completely and presumably replace it with Turkey's mainly Sunni Arab Syrian allies in the Syrian National Government (a token government in exile which exists on Turkish soil) and the Free Syrian Army, it is not clear why a strip of this kind would continue to be needed after PYD rule was ended.

Failed deal with the US

During the summer however, Turkey and the United States, and the mainly Kurdish Syrian Defence force did agree on a much slimmer 5-km wide safe zone. On 8 September the zone was formally announced and the first of several joint patrols began. This did not end Turkish suspicions that the US was trying to forestall measures which would break the military power of its Kurdish allies.²⁸ President Erdoğan however announced several times during September that he was giving the experiment with the US only 30 days, after which Turkey would be free to impose its own solution, i.e. carrying out a full

²⁶ *YeniÇağ*, 11 October 2019, <https://www.yenicaggazetesi.com.tr/soylu-savas-olarak-niteleyenler-ihanet-icindedir-7530v.htm>

²⁷ *Deutsche Welle*, 9 October, <https://www.dw.com/en/explained-why-turkey-wants-a-military-assault-on-syrian-kurds/a-50731834> and see also Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Protection_Units

²⁸ *Turkish President Erdoğan Vows To 'Start Forming Safe Zone' In Northeast Syria 'By The Last Week Of September'*, Middle East Media Research Institute, 27 September 2019, <https://www.memri.org/reports/turkish-president-erdogan-vows-start-forming-safe-zone-northeast-syria-last-week-september>

scale invasion. It seems moreover that Ankara found it difficult to adjust to the idea of a sharply reduced 'safe zone'.²⁹

One obstacle remaining for a Turkish incursion was that about 1000 US military personnel in Syria would be in the firing line of the advancing Turkish forces. This blockage was removed on 7 October when President Trump announced that he had ordered US troops in Syria to 'stand aside' in order to allow the Turkish armed forces to advance.³⁰ This enabled the invasion to go ahead, but provoked a storm of criticism in the US, including among senior Republican Congressmen and it led to proposals to introduce very strong sanctions against Turkey. Trump's initial position has not held. Once the invasion started, the President moved again on 13 October and ordered the evacuation of American military personnel from Syria.

A second goal of operations in northern Syria, outlined in several speeches by President Erdoğan, is to open up territory for resettling Syrian migrants now in Turkey, perhaps as many as a million of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees officially acknowledged to be living in Turkey. This would be an immense and perhaps an impractical operation.³¹ President Erdoğan and his spokespersons have been careful to repeat that Turkey has no ambitions on Syrian territory and will hand occupied territory back some day to a democratically elected constitutional Syrian government, presumably mainly Sunni.³²

The human cost of such a population transfer would obviously be immense. There seems to be almost no discussion of this in Turkey but it has been the source of sharp criticism elsewhere. The prevailing line in Ankara has been that this shows 'the West' allying with terrorists and supporting the killing of Muslims. President Erdoğan accused the German Foreign Minister of 'not knowing his place' and said that the Arab League, which also issued a condemnation, did not deserve its name.³³

Russia and Syria do a deal with the YPG

Crucially in view of what later happened, though little noticed, there also seemed to be growing doubts about Turkey's intentions in northern Syria in both Damascus and Moscow, even though Russia, along with President Trump, was the enabler of Operation Peace Spring. On 1 October, *Pravda*

²⁹ *Turkey has plan B if US fails to keep promises for Syria safe zone: Defense minister*, Hürriyet Daily News 3 September, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-has-plan-b-if-us-fails-to-keep-promises-for-syria-safe-zone-defense-minister-146257>

³⁰ *Euronews*, 7 October, 2019, <https://www.euronews.com/2019/10/07/u-s-says-it-will-stand-aside-turkey-moves-syria-n1063106>

³¹ See Sibel Hürtaş *Is Erdogan resettlement plan for Syrian refugees really viable? Al Monitor* October 11 2019, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/10/turkey-syria-safe-zone-resettlement-plan-is-not-viable.html>

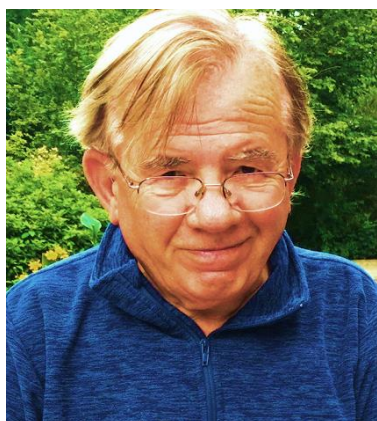
³² This was most recently pledged by President Erdoğan at the Turkish, Iranian, Russian summit in Istanbul on 16 September, see <https://www.dw.com/en/erdogan-putin-rouhani-hold-productive-talks-on-syria/a-50449646>, also "The biggest threat to Syria's future is the PKK and its extension PYD/YPG", website of the Presidency of the Turkish Republic, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/109649/-the-biggest-threat-to-syria-s-future-is-the-pkk-and-its-extension-pyd-ypg->

³³ *Daily Sabah*, 16 October, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2019/10/16/turkey-wont-sit-at-negotiating-table-with-terrorists-erdogan-says>

reported that ‘Turkey’s Erdoğan Plans Annexation of Northern Syrian Territory’ and in early October Moscow seemed to be stepping up criticism of the proposed Turkish operation east of the Euphrates.³⁴ The incursion began on 9 October and seemed to be going more easily than expected with the YPG taking heavy casualties – 637 deaths in the first week according to Turkey – plus three Turkish forces casualties.

However on 13 October it was revealed that the YPG and the Syrian Government had reached agreement, brokered by Russia.³⁵ The terms of this deal were that the YPG would dissolve itself, transfer its fighters and resources to the Syrian government, and be reconstituted as the Fifth Syrian Army. (This could have grave legal and political implications for Turkey in any continuing clashes.) All parts of the former autonomous Kurdish Syrian areas would return to administration by Damascus, but the Kurdish identity would be enshrined in Syria’s constitution. Finally Syrian government forces would take over the defence of the whole of the border.³⁶

At the same time Syrian and Russian troops moved into the key centres Kobane and Manbij, instantly replacing the departing Americans. In Turkey, at the time of writing, an air of jubilant rejoicing accompanies all official discussion of Operation Peace Spring, and President Erdoğan has said he does not object to the Russian troops arriving in Manbij while vituperation against ‘the West’ and a ceasefire is ruled out. President Erdoğan is to go to Moscow to discuss the situation before the end of October. Will Turkey by then have to face a *fait accompli*?



Pitfalls in the Turkish Nuclear Programme

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³⁴ See Pravda, 1 October 2019, http://www.pravdareport.com/world/142790-turkey_syria/

³⁵ Tele1, 15 October, ‘Turkey learnt the Facts about Syria from Tele1’ (in Turkish) <https://tele1.com.tr/turkiye-suriye-gercegini-tele1den-ogrendi-92272/>, and 14 October, *Turkey and Syria’s Five Points Agreement*, <https://tele1.com.tr/pyd-ve-suriye-5-maddede-anlasti-92045/g>

³⁶ Given in Turkish at <https://tele1.com.tr/pyd-ve-suriye-5-maddede-anlasti-92045/>. These details have been mentioned in some Kurdish and Iranian sources but to date not in the mainstream Turkish media.

The origins of nuclear power go back to 1885 when Röntgen discovered the X-ray and one year later Becquerel identified natural radiation. In 1939 Hahn and Strassman achieved the splitting of the uranium atom in Berlin which initiated fission technology. Three years later in the USA Fermi proved that the fission chain reaction in uranium nuclei could be sustained and controlled, making it feasible to harness this energy. Then nuclear technology developed in two different ways; the creation of a nuclear bomb and the development of a nuclear reactor for power generation. On 6 August 1945 a successfully assembled uranium-235 bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on 12 August a plutonium bomb was dropped on Nagasaki which ended the war in the Pacific.

After the war a number of European countries along with the USA decided to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes but there was a problem: insurance cover. Private power utilities disliked nuclear energy because of their liability in the event of accidents which would create damage amounting to billions of dollars. In the USA the Price Anderson Act of 1957 limited the liability for an accident in a nuclear utility no matter how many people are killed or injured, or how many properties destroyed or contaminated. The maximum liability was set at \$560 million. With the liabilities reduced to manageable proportions the utilities found the nuclear business to their liking. A similar situation happened in some other countries. Another issue which gave a boost to nuclear power was the argument put forward by the US Atomic Energy Commission that 'nuclear energy was too cheap to meter'.

In 1957 the USA's first nuclear power plant opened at Shippingport, Pennsylvania. Canada, the UK, West Germany, France, the Soviet Union and Japan followed suit. By 1990 there were about 420 nuclear reactors in operations providing about 20% of the world's energy requirement. This figure was much higher in some countries such as France where 70% of its need was supplied by nuclear means. However, the tide was turning against nuclear power in the 1980s as accidents in Three Mile Island and Chernobyl increased public anxiety. Furthermore, a worldwide concern was growing about what to do with the accumulation of vast quantities of nuclear waste. In this respect a number of nuclear power generating units, including the already completed plants were cancelled in the USA. The Swedish government went further by deciding to phase out all nuclear power plants.

The Turkish Case

In the late 1950s the Turkish government, greatly impressed by the argument that nuclear power was 'too cheap to meter', wanted to jump on the bandwagon. To this effect it made a bilateral agreement with the USA for the peaceful development of nuclear power in the country. In 1970 there was a feasibility study about the construction of a small 300 megawatt plant but this did not happen because of a number of technical problems and shortage of highly skilled staff. In 1996 a medium sized 2000 megawatt nuclear unit was considered in Southern Turkey in collaboration with Siemens, Westinghouse, Mitsubishi and some others. This too did not materialise because of lack of money.

Globally the nuclear industry began to enjoy a revival in the early 2000s as the construction of nuclear units gathered pace. The International Atomic Energy Association estimated that in 2010 there were 435 nuclear reactors operating in the world, run by 32 countries. China appears to have been the most enthusiastic country in the expansion of nuclear power as it decided to build 42 new reactors as soon as possible. In 2007 the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan contended that Turkey was too timid in embracing nuclear power, which is clean, safe and cheap. On 9 November 2007 an act was passed in the Turkish parliament which gave the Turkish Atomic Energy Authority authorisation to establish criteria to build and operate nuclear power plants in the country. The Turkish Electricity Trade and Contract Company



would then buy all the generated nuclear electricity from the producers whoever they were under a 15-year renewable agreement. One year later tenders were invited to establish a 4800 megawatt unit in southern Turkey which attracted the interest of many international nuclear power corporations. In 2010 the government signed an agreement with a Russian firm, Rosatom, to build and operate a 4800 megawatt plant consisting of four equal size reactors at Akkuyu, a district of Mersin. Three years later another deal was signed with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to establish a similar size plant in the northern coastal town of Sinop. The government also wants a third nuclear unit at İğneada, near the Bulgarian border. The Turkish Atomic Energy Authority will be in charge of all regulatory activities including site selection, radiation safety, construction, running and closure. It will also conduct regular site inspections.

Various unrealistic cost estimates for the Akkuyu plant were put forward, mainly by a number of government representatives. Mr Taner Yıldız, a previous Energy Minister in the AKP government, first suggested that this plant could be built at a cost of about \$2 billion. In his later statements he gradually increased his estimates. The Turkish Premier's last estimate was \$22 billion. More recently the Russian Embassy in Ankara pointed out that the most realistic figure for this investment would be around \$25 billion³⁷. In fact, the real figure is likely to be much higher, a similar size plant in the UK would cost above \$30 billion. When completed and working at full capacity the Akkuyu plant will only provide 5% of Turkey's electricity needs and its power output will be anything but cheap. In fact this amount could be achieved by reducing the waste in distribution and pilferage which is high in Turkey.

Anomalies of Nuclear Power

There is no business like nuclear business for it contains a number of oddities. Unfortunately, Turkey has not made enough preparation for these. First, most people now realise that the expression 'too cheap to meter' has

³⁷ World Nuclear Organisation, *Nuclear Power in Turkey*, world-nuclear.org/info/country-profiles/Countries-T-Z/Turkey, 2013

become 'too expensive to afford'. Construction costs of nuclear power have been increasing relentlessly mainly for two reasons; tightening of health and safety regulations and delays in getting the projects ready due to technical problems. Research in France, a country which is most dependent on nuclear power, suggests that electricity generated by nuclear means is more expensive than electricity produced by hydro, thermal, solar, wind and fossil fuel even without taking into account closure and waste disposal costs³⁸. Expensive power generated by the Akkuyu, Sinop and İğneada projects will undermine the competitiveness of the Turkish industry which relies substantially on exports.

As mentioned above the insurance problem is unique to nuclear power. There is no other sector which relies to this degree on public support. In Turkey it is not clear what kind of initiative has been taken to deal with this oddity.

Another unique problem with nuclear power is decommissioning. When a typical production facility reaches the end of its natural life machinery, tools, buildings and land sold off at a salvage value bring in money. In the closure of a nuclear facility exactly the opposite happens. When a nuclear power plant is operating land, material, machinery and engineering structures get contaminated. When the activity is closed the disposal of contaminated items presents substantial problems. Land, buildings and materials cannot be abandoned or used for other purposes. Buildings cannot be converted into shopping centres; machinery and engineering structures cannot be made into razor blades or other articles. Land cannot be opened up for housing development. Closure of a nuclear facility requires taking down huge structures, cleaning the immediate and nearby districts and transferring highly toxic nuclear waste to permanent nuclear repositories. It takes about 6-7 years to build a nuclear power plant if no serious technical problems occur. But decommissioning takes at least 30 years. For example in Scotland the decommissioning of the Dounreay plant started in the 1980s and is still continuing. For this operation about £4 billion has been allocated which, it is argued, will not be enough. In Sellafield, where large quantities of nuclear waste have been temporarily kept, the cost of management has already exceeded £50 billion with no sign that it will stop increasing.

The decommissioning costs of the Akkuyu unit have not been estimated by the Turkish government nor are they included in a number of reports which have so far been published. In one report the environmental impact assessment which includes decommissioning is mentioned in a couple of sentences, to the effect that the issue will be handled when the time comes³⁹. This facility – if it comes into operation in 2023 – will work for about 40 years but the nuclear lobby unconvincingly contends that its working life will be far more than 50 years.

³⁸ OECD, *Projected Costs of Generating Electricity: 2010 Edition*, ISBN 978-92-64-08430-8, Paris

³⁹ DOKAY-ÇED Çevre Mühendisliği Ltd Şti, Akkuyu nuclear power project, Ankara, Aziziye mahallesi Kırkpınar sokak no.18/5, 2011

A fourth anomaly with nuclear power is the risk of an accident with catastrophic consequences. So far we have witnessed two major accidents – one in Chernobyl in Ukraine and the other in Fukushima in Japan – where large areas of the territory have been abandoned as a result. Furthermore, there are unusually high levels of cancer and genetic deformities in these areas which will pass onto future generations.

Risk of terrorism is another factor to mention. The theft of plutonium for the purpose of terrorism scares all nuclear countries. Saudi Arabian terrorists who ran passenger planes into the twin towers of New York also considered doing the same thing to nuclear power stations. Today in the UK nuclear power plants are protected by the Royal Air Force and other security groups. Turkey is a country which has suffered badly from terrorism and the risk is far from over.

Perhaps the strangest part of the nuclear undertaking is the disposal of extremely dangerous and longlasting nuclear waste. As a nuclear power plant operates it generates various kinds of toxic substances some of which remain active for millions of years creating dangers for living organisms on our planet. A medium sized facility generates about 30 tons of waste per annum. During its operational life the accumulated waste exceeds 1000 tons. The Turkish plant is going to be a very large one and the waste inventory will be in excess of 2000 tons and this must be safely disposed of in 100% secure nuclear graves. US Senator Howard Baker argues that “The containment and storage of radioactive wastes is the greatest single responsibility ever consciously undertaken by man”. To this effect the US Environmental Protection Agency recommends that a nuclear waste storage grave must be capable of isolating nuclear substances for at least 10,000 years. In the UK, however, this figure is one million years⁴⁰. These time scales dwarf recorded human history. It must be obvious that the great risk will fall upon the future of humankind and all the other species living on earth. I have read several environmental impact assessment reports commissioned by the government from groups which are mainly sympathetic to nuclear power and none of them gives any meaningful coverage to the waste disposal issue.

It has been contended that nuclear power does not emit CO² and is thus environmentally friendly. This is not so when we consider the entire nuclear cycle which contains thirteen stages from uranium milling and disposal in ‘safe repositories’ during which time almost the same level of greenhouse gasses are emitted⁴¹.

I believe that renewable energy will enable us to avoid intensifying environmental problems. Nuclear energy is not a renewable resource as it uses highly scarce uranium which – just like fossil fuel – will be exhausted one

⁴⁰ Kula Erhun, ‘Future Generations and Nuclear Power – a pluralistic economic appraisal’, *Futures*, 73, 2015, pp.37-47

⁴¹ Shradder-Frchette Kristin S, ‘Greenhouse emissions and nuclear energy’, *Modern Energy Review* 1, No.1, August 2009, pp.54-57

day. Turkey has an abundance of renewable substitutes such as sunshine, wind, thermal and water power. For example, together with Spain Turkey enjoys an enviable location in Europe for the development of solar power. In the 1950s and 1960s many countries went headlong into the nuclear venture. Some learnt from their mistakes and subsequently kept out of it but some did not. Unfortunately Turkey falls into the latter category.

Anad's Corner

Hülya Çiğdem Anad İbrahimhakkioğlu

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The 2019 university entrance examination results in Turkey caused great alarm in some circles. Why?

Because students who could answer only 1 out of 13 science questions correctly would have no hope of confronting a government which demands nuclear weapons, blasts mines in virgin forests and ignores the dangers of earthquakes in İstanbul by taking no safety precautions against them. These young people have no idea about Michio Kaku, who wrote *Physics of the Future* and explained how lifestyles will be changed in the near future.

Because high school graduates who give 10 wrong answers out of 12 philosophy questions have no awareness of what an analytical procedure is.

Because young people who are not able to answer 35 out of 40 Maths questions can say things such as: "It is not important for us that the exchange rate is rising, we spend Turkish lira" – as we have seen in press interviews.

Because students gave only 14 correct answers out of 40 in their mother tongue Turkish language exam. Consequently we cannot expect such students to argue eloquently about democracy.

We need to point out here that the number of religious school (İmam Hatip) students has increased fivefold in the last five years. Most of their students do not want to attend religious schools but they have to. The government has turned most of the state schools into religious schools and candidates have no choice. In 61 out of 81 provinces in Turkey, religious schools outnumber state schools. This is an example of government policy focusing on religion as the centre of social life. We cannot expect such students to argue for democracy when the government dismisses the elected mayors of Diyarbakır,

Van and Mardin from their posts because they protested against government policies.

The better educated brothers and sisters of today's young people revolted against the government in the 'Gezi' riots in 2013. Today, they are frightened, in hiding and most of them are out of work. Today having a university degree is no guarantee of a job. Young people kill time on social media by looking for jokes to cheer themselves up and help them forget their lost future. They watch Netflix and sleep, listen to electronic music and avoid thinking.

Thinking people, who speak out and criticize, are treated as traitors, kicked out of their jobs, put into prison, forced to emigrate. All this frightens people and makes them lose hope for the future.

The authorities, who are wary of a handful of potentially bright young people take precautionary measures against them. But rumour has it that the number of anti-nationalist and anti-religious supporters among the younger population is considerable. Is it really so difficult for those young people, with mutually shared political views, to come together and rebel against the administration? Not really. That is why the power of authority focuses its magnifying glass on such youth just in case it does rebel.

However, one day, at some time, some young people may become more powerful than anything before. For example, Ezhel and Şanişer, two rap groups, have suddenly appeared on the scene. Seventeen rap singers were involved in a rap clip entitled 'I cannot keep quiet'. These video clips tell the reality of Turkey in a wide frame by harshly criticising Turkey's policies. An audience of over a billion watched these clips in one day on YouTube. Although authoritarian regimes try to oppress the energy of youth, minds cannot be captured.



CYPRUS

We are looking for a contributor who will write a **CYPRUS UPDATE** for our two annual issues. This will continue the coverage of new events in the island which has been provided for many years by the late Professor Clement Dodd. If you might be able to write this feature for *TASReview* please contact one of the Co-Editors.

FROM THE 2019 BATAS SYMPOSIUM

Late Ottoman and Republican Turkish Discourses on Islam and Civilization⁴²

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The History of the Concept of Civilization in the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Periods

'Civilization' was part and parcel of a bundle of new concepts which came to the fore in the long nineteenth century: a time defined by the conceptual revolution of modernity, which entailed the objectification (or reification) of collective social phenomena. 'Civilization', in its universalist sense of being a world-wide phenomenon defined by objective criteria of what is valuable and worthwhile, was a late eighteenth/early nineteenth century invention in Europe. The idea of distinct civilizations as separate entities – or civilization in the plural – emerged in the late nineteenth century, partly as a reaction to the universalist implications of the term and the links it began to acquire with imperialism.

The concept had somewhat parallel histories in the European and late Ottoman contexts. The concept of 'civilization' (the word eventually used for which was 'medeniyet') as a universal process entered the Ottoman language from French and English in the 1830s. Civilization in the late Ottoman period also became associated with European/Western civilization, linked to science, rationality and the Enlightenment. The idea of an Islamic civilization (in contradistinction to civilization in the universalist sense) came to the fore in the late nineteenth century in reaction to the idea of a universal, modern, European civilization.⁴³

Most closely associated with the idea of an Islamic civilization was a group of intellectuals of the 1860s and 1870s, later labelled 'Young Ottomans'. They are credited with 'inventing' pan-Islamism, partly for the purpose of strengthening the empire.⁴⁴ Sultan Abdülhamid (1876-1909) appropriated

⁴²This paper is part of a bigger project which was supported in its inception by the British Academy in 2015-16 (grant number MD150005). The project is ongoing and will lead to publication of a number of articles and a monograph by the author.

⁴³Aydın, C (2017) *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

⁴⁴ Mardin Ş (1962) *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 59-60.

politically the Young Ottoman vision of Islamic unity⁴⁵ and with it, implicitly, the idea of Islamic civilization, but also contributed to its transformation: the interpretation of the term which came to prevail during his reign lacked the universalist dimensions it had been given by the Young Ottomans.

Subtle transformations in how 'civilization' was conceptualized can be discerned in the Young Turk movement, which arose as a political reaction to Abdülhamid's Islamism (and his authoritarianism) but also represented an intellectual riposte to the worldviews he stood for. From their establishment of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1889, through the important turning point of 1902, the moment the CUP achieved power in 1908, and after the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, the Young Turks underwent a gradual shift towards a secular Turkish nationalism which entailed, inevitably, a reappraisal of the relationship between Islam and modernity (a major figure here was Mehmet Ziya Gökalp). As their political history developed, the Young Turks increasingly adopted a secular worldview which described religion and modernization as antagonistic to one another. As a result, they increasingly treated Islam as an element of an Ottoman, then Turkish identity within a nationalist framework and in the last phase of the empire (1913-1918) the judicial and educational systems became more secularized.⁴⁶ After 1908 the dominant Young Turk elite operated on the basis of the 'modern/secular' versus 'traditional/Islamic' schema and placed 'civilization' firmly in the former category.



The idea of a civilizational rivalry between 'East' and 'West', which becomes prevalent by the 1920s, defines the last phase of the intellectual trajectory of the Young Turks (who, loosely defined, dominate the Republic until 1950). 'Young Turks' is a label that encompassed many different strands of thought. The one that dominates with the arrival of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his circle, who led the war of independence (1919-22) and the newly established Republic, was the 'Westernizer' branch of the Young Turks ('garbcılar'). They saw European civilization as indivisible and wanted Turkey to adopt it wholesale. Kemal regarded European civilization as the only civilization.⁴⁷ A fervent Turkish nationalism after the establishment of the Republic in 1923 was seen as bringing Turkey in line with modernity and incorporating Turkey into Western 'civilization' while, at the same time, asserting the country's independent identity.

'Civilization' and 'Islamic Civilization' in the Thought of Three Generations of Islamist Intellectuals

Islamic thought was marginalized and suppressed in the years after 1923 but, with the introduction of multi-partyism in 1945 and the Democrat Party's electoral success in 1950, the parameters of intellectual debate began to alter. Islamic revival was stimulated by and in turn fuelled the popular religious

⁴⁵ Findley C (2010) *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p 149.

⁴⁶ Zürcher EJ (1993) *Turkey: A Modern History*. London: I.B. Tauris, p 125.

⁴⁷ Mango A (2008) 'Ataturk'. In: Kasaba R (ed) *The Cambridge History of Turkey vol. 4: Turkey in the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 163 and 170.

orders, which had survived the Kemalist onslaught. Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011), the doyen of Islamist politics and a thinker who had a lot to say about 'civilization' and 'Islamic civilization', established the first 'Islamic' parties, the National Order Party (1970-1971) and the National Salvation Party (NSP) (1972-1981).⁴⁸ Erbakan became the main proponent of the *Milli Görüş* (National Outlook) movement which brought together aspects of Islam, Ottoman and Turkish norms and sought a cultural revival based on these norms. For Erbakan, Turkey was 'the cultural centre of Islamic civilization in Europe' also because of its association with the Balkans.⁴⁹ The idea of Islamic civilization also became influential through the body of thought centring on the notion of a 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis', whose chief ideologue, İbrahim Kafesoğlu, asserted that 'Islam held a special attraction for the Turks because of a number of (supposedly) striking similarities between their pre-Islamic culture and Islamic civilization'; according to this theory, Turkish culture was built on a Turkish and an Islamic element.⁵⁰

It is within this broad context of Islamist revivalism that the first generation of Islamist intellectuals, focusing more directly on the idea of 'Islamic civilization' and Turkey's role within it, must be situated. It came into its own in the 1950s and centred on figures such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Nurettin Topçu and Sezai Karakoç.

Kısakürek (1904-83), who by the 1960s and 1970s was viewed as the dominant conservative voice in Turkey, saw Islam not strictly as a religion but also as a civilization and 'reinvented the Ottoman past as being the essence of Islamic civilization'.⁵¹ Already from the 1940s and 1950s, he was promoting the idea of 'Büyük Doğu' (Great East) which he saw as a great civilization, confronting the West.⁵² For Kısakürek, Turkish Muslims must not imitate the West as they have done in the past; and nationalism must serve Islam, not vice-versa. He saw Islam as the 'real and universal civilization', immune to the shortcomings of Western civilization.⁵³ But even though he promoted an Islamic civilization as a superior alternative to the West, he borrowed heavily from the latter, in particular sharing with Western Orientalism an essentialization of 'West' and 'East'.⁵⁴ This was partly because, notwithstanding the anti-Western animus which characterized his thinking, Kısakürek had been schooled in Western thought; more particularly, he 'owed more than he wished to admit to French writers'.⁵⁵ He was arguably typical of

⁴⁸ Mardin Ş (2005) 'Turkish Islamic Exceptionalism Yesterday and Today: Continuity, Rupture and Reconstruction in Operational Codes'. *Turkish Studies* 6(2), pp. 157-158.

⁴⁹ Yavuz MH (2003) *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 236.

⁵⁰ Zürcher, *op.cit.*, pp. 302-303.

⁵¹ Yavuz, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

⁵² Kısakürek NF (1968) *İdeolojya Örgüsü* [The Weave of Ideology]. Istanbul: Büyük Doğu Yayınları.

⁵³ Duran B (2001) *Transformation of Islamist Political Thought in Turkey from the Empire to the Early Republic (1908-1960)*. PhD Thesis, Bilkent University, Turkey, pp. 321-322.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁵⁵ Findley, *op.cit.*, p. 339.

a broader trend of the time, which used dominant Western concepts to restate Islamic values and his work had the clear imprint of French models.⁵⁶

The global economic crisis of the 1970s led to the questioning of modernisation and a surge in conservatism in the 1980s, both worldwide and in Turkey. Following the 1980 military coup, and the political crushing of the left, the country shifted to the right and the army itself adopted and promoted the idea of the 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' (discussed above). The Motherland Party of the 1980s, led by Turgut Özal, adopted many of the positions of Erbakan's (by then defunct) National Salvation Party about Western and Islamic civilization.⁵⁷

Within this context, a second generation of Islamist intellectuals which included influential figures such as Ali Bulaç, İsmet Özel, Rasim Özdenören, İlhan Kutluer and Ersin Gürdoğan, offered new standpoints on Western and Islamic civilization.⁵⁸ They refused to countenance the possibility of Islam and the West reaching accommodation and argued that science and technology, as practised in the West, are incompatible with Islam. They also rejected the glorification of the Ottoman past⁵⁹ and stressed the Koran and sunna, and the period of the first four rightly guided caliphs, vis-à-vis the historicization of Islam within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁰ They opposed the West in 'civilizational terms' and saw the unquestioning acceptance of industrialization as a submission to imperialism. They criticized the notion of development wholesale and asserted the superiority of the spiritual values of Islam over the material wealth of the West.⁶¹

For all their denunciation of Western 'civilization', however, the discourses of the second Islamist generation thinkers in Turkey were firmly rooted in the concept of civilization, both in its universalist sense and in the particularist one of Islamic civilization, which had originated in the nineteenth century. These discourses also echoed the rejection of modernization theories so widespread in the West during the same period; they have even been described as 'post-modern'⁶², comparing them to Western critics of modernization. This comes as no surprise, as the second-generation Islamist intellectuals were well-versed in Western social and political thought, social sciences, languages and 'the structure of their discourse reflects the logical sequence of secular thought'.⁶³ They had an interest in Western literature, philosophy, or social

⁵⁶ Lewis B (1952) 'Islamic Revival in Turkey'. *International Affairs* 28(1), pp. 44-45.

⁵⁷ Toprak B (1993) 'Islamist Intellectuals: Revolt against Industry and Technology'. In: Heper M, Öncü A, and Kramer H (eds) *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, pp. 241-242.

⁵⁸ Sena Karasipahi, (2007) *Muslims in Modern Turkey: Kemalism, Modernism, and the Revolt of Islamic Intellectuals*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2007.

⁵⁹ Toprak, *op.cit.*, pp. 252-253.

⁶⁰ Yavuz, *op.cit.*, p. 118.

⁶¹ Gülalp H (1997) 'Modernization Policies and Islamist Politics in Turkey'. In: Bozdoğan S and Kasaba R (eds) *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*. Washington DC: University of Washington Press, pp. 57-61.

⁶² Çınar M and Kadioğlu A (1999) 'An Islamic Critique of Modernity in Turkey: Politics of Difference Backwards'. *Orient* 40: 53-69.

⁶³ Toprak, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

history; they wrote 'in a conceptual and semantic field that has considerable overlap with [their] secular counterparts'; and fell within 'the boundaries of the political and cultural discourse of the urban, educated Turkish elite'.⁶⁴ Ultimately, just as the first generation of Islamists, this second generation 'accepted the Eurocentric assertion of an essential difference between the West and the East' and thereby reproduced Orientalism's essentialist assumptions.⁶⁵

Changes in the political situation and in the intellectual atmosphere in Turkey by the 1990s gave rise to a third generation of Islamist intellectuals and a new viewpoint on Islamic civilization. Striving for recognition and protection against the dominant Turkish Kemalist establishment, Islamists started embracing ideas such as human rights and democracy. The EU pressure on Turkey for reform seemed to offer to the Islamists the prospect of legal protection and by the late 1990s some Islamist intellectuals had already become enthusiastic defenders of EU integration. Islamist parties, namely the Virtue party, which emerged following the shutting down of Erbakan's Welfare party in 1999, and subsequently the Justice and Development Party (AKP), established in 2001, revised their position on EU membership. For the first few years of the AKP government, which came to power in 2002, 'integration into the West and maintaining Islamic identity [were] no longer seen as mutually exclusive choices'⁶⁶ - though this changed in the 2010s.

Ahmet Davutoğlu (b.1959) was the key member of the third generation of Islamist intellectuals which emerged in the 2000s and 2010s and we can observe, in his *oeuvre*, continuous references to the idea of an Islamic civilization, juxtaposed with a Western civilization: this was particularly so in his two major works on the subject, both published in 1994.⁶⁷ Davutoğlu argued that Turkey can have a potentially central role in this Islamic civilization. In his later book *Strategic Depth* (2001), he maintained that 'bridge' countries like Turkey, which contain many civilizational heritages, are an important source for a new civilizational opening. Instead of a clash, Davutoğlu saw signs of the synthesizing of a new civilization which would spread in the world.⁶⁸ In a challenge to Samuel Huntington's description of Turkey as a 'torn' country, Davutoğlu argued that it could become strong by adopting a wide and consensual sense of belonging; it could make a contribution to global civilization by attempting a new civilizational opening,

⁶⁴ Meeker M (1991) 'The New Muslim Intellectuals in the Republic of Turkey'. In: Tapper R (ed) *Islam in Modern Turkey*. London: I.B. Tauris, p. 190-193.

⁶⁵ Güllalp, *op.cit.*, pp. 57-61.

⁶⁶ Dağı İ (2006) 'The Justice and Development Party: Identity, Politics, and Discourse of Human Rights in the Search for Security and Legitimacy'. In: Yavuz H (ed) *The Emergence of A New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*. Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, p. 92.

⁶⁷ Davutoğlu A (1994a) *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory*. Lanham-New York-London: University Press of America.

Davutoğlu A (1994b) *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World*. Kuala Lumpur: Brill.

⁶⁸ Davutoğlu A (2001) *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position]. Istanbul: Küre Yayınları, p. 563.

thereby cancelling the trap of its 'geocivilizational' rejection ('jeokültürel dışlanma').⁶⁹

Hidden behind this seemingly congruent reconceptualization of the relationship between Turkey, Europe and Islam, however, persisted quite a conventional and rather rigid representation of 'Islamic civilization' as juxtaposed with 'Western civilization'. 'East' versus 'West' continued as the starting point of Davutoğlu's thought, and he saw it as going back in history (even if he argued that the conflict can be overcome in the future in some ways). Similarly to religiously conservative Turkish circles, Davutoğlu viewed the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey as being in a confrontational relationship with Europe and the West. He presented Turkey's Republican pro-European orientation as a result of European hegemony and a temporary aberration. He saw Turkey as 'the hub of an enormous Eurasian-African land mass' but also promoted 'a culturally motivated Turkish identity, historically anchored by the centuries-long confrontational dispute with Europe'.⁷⁰ All in all, Davutoğlu's conception of 'civilization' as a distinct identity remained defined by the parameters of nineteenth century thought on the subject, parameters which he shared with his Western counterparts tackling the issue.

Conclusion

Both the concept of 'civilization' in its universal sense and of civilization in the particular sense of 'Islamic civilization' were nineteenth century constructions, even though they are conceived as going back in history. The concept of 'civilization' emerged in the Ottoman Empire in the early nineteenth century concurrently with Europe but, increasingly, a rift opened between the idea of civilization in the universal sense and the notion of particular civilizations. By the late nineteenth century, facilitated by technological and social changes and Abdülhamid's policies, the concept of the 'Islamic world' came into being and 'Islamic civilization' had become a declaration of identity against the West. With the emergence of the Turkish Republic, and together with a strong sense of nationalism, came a forceful articulation of 'civilization' as a universal, secular set of ideas and processes and an aspiration for Turkey to adhere to its principles.

The Kemalist worldview was challenged from the 1950s onwards by three generations of Islamist intellectuals, each of which posited distinct, albeit inter-related notions of Islamic civilization and Turkey's role within it. The first generation of Islamist intellectuals, who centered on the figure of Kısakürek, depicted Islamic civilization as the antithesis of the West. The second generation, which included thinkers such as Bulaç and Özel, rejected historical Islamic civilizations, including the Ottoman one, and argued that Muslims must look back to the ideal time of the prophet for inspiration and guidance. The third generation, among whom Davutoğlu stands out, did not

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷⁰ Seufert G (2012) *Foreign Policy and Self-Image*. SWP Research Paper, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Germany, September, pp. 13-15.

necessarily see a clash between East and West but held on to an essentializing discourse about Islamic civilization.

All in all, the Islamist proponents of the view that there exist immutable differences between Eastern and Western civilizations partake in the same conceptual framework with the West and operate within equivalent intellectual parameters. There exists, since the nineteenth century and across the board a commonality in frames and concepts which suggests a shared modern experience – an experience that binds societies together across the imagined divisions of ‘East’ and ‘West’.



Forging the Spirit of Gezi:

in

Perihan Mağden's *Two Girls*

and

Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*

Keya Anjaria
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Gezi Park Protests

The Gezi protests began on 28 May, 2013 when a small group of environmental activists held a sit-in, protesting the privatisation and redevelopment of the small but prominent central, green space of Gezi Park in the Taksim/Beyoğlu area. Things quickly escalated, in part because of the heavy-handed crack-down by the police. From this initial sit-in, direct action events and protests spread throughout the country. A week later, as protests were continuing in Istanbul, they had also spread to Antakya, Eskişehir, Erdine, Bursa, Izmir and Ankara. By 5 June the first reports of injury emerged, with a reported 4,355 hurt by brutal police action.⁷¹ As protests continued and efforts to suppress them were only partially successful, Turkey continued to reel from the demonstrations. On 23 June, a little less than a month after the protests began, the Ministry of the Interior reported that almost 2.5 million people had taken part in demonstrations in 79 of Turkey's 81 provinces.⁷² Although slowing slightly, protests continued throughout July, with the last wave starting



⁷¹ Umut Özkırımlı 'Timeline of Gezi Protests' in *The Making of a Protest Movement in Turkey: #occupygezi*, ed. Umut Özkırımlı (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 144.

⁷² Ibid., 145

on 20 August, almost three months after the initial protest. While the protests mostly died down after the summer, their impact has been undoubtedly felt even up to today.

In many ways, the events of the Gezi Protests are knowable and known. It only takes a quick internet or library catalogue search to find a thorough and clear timeline and map of the events. There are also many noted aspects of the uniqueness of the Gezi protests: among them, firstly, the wide-spread and successful use of online platforms to initiate protests as well as get past state censors and to publish information on the protests. Secondly, the movement has been recognised as bringing together enormously disparate groups of activists, ranging from Kurdish mothers to football supporters, environmentalists to anti-neoliberal activists, secularists and Muslims. Thirdly, given that the movement started as a local and localised call to save a public space, the fact that it swept over the nation quickly and resolutely is remarkable.

So what has made the Gezi Park protests so impactful? This article, based on the paper presented at a BATAS Symposium⁷³, approaches the question of the Gezi Protests from a different angle in order to answer this question; it centres not on the who, what and why of the events in the summer of 2013, but rather the ephemeral and immeasurable forces of culture and collectivity, often called the 'Spirit of Gezi'. This term, used throughout the summer of 2013, in its immediate aftermath and into today is a somewhat flexible one. It was firstly coined by the academic Mehmet Karlı in a televised interview on 7 June, 2013⁷⁴ and has generally taken on the meaning of the immeasurable and intangible aspects of cohesion and solidarity that fuelled and sustained the Gezi Protests. Likewise, it has been used to capture the unlikely solidarity and diversity of the activists; to highlight the notion of resistance and direct democratic action; to consider society functioning as (not in spite of) its multivalent, multilayered and often competing positions. Above all, it is a way to evoke the legacy of a powerful moment in contemporary Turkish life.

From the concept of the spirit of Gezi, this article uses two examples from the Turkish novel canon to consider the dimensions and significance of the term. It primarily focuses on Gezi's location in the Taksim area of Beyoğlu, as a unique site in Turkish literature, as one way in which to consider where this spirit of resistance, camaraderie and optimism has come from and how it might have been absorbed in the cultural (un)consciousness of Turkey. It suggests that the location's prevalence and importance in the literary imaginary has helped make it possible for both disparate groups to coalesce in partnership in the summer of 2013 as well as to make it possible for activists and demonstrators, even those who had never been to Gezi Park, to feel solidarity with the local, Istanbul action.

⁷³ Keya Anjaria 'The Spirit of Gezi': Taksim Square in Perihan Mağden's *Two Girls* and Orhan Pamuk's *Black Book* BATAS Annual Spring Symposium, Cambridge: UK, May 2019.

⁷⁴ M. Ragip Zik, 'Visuals and Salient Identities: The Construction of "Gezi Spirit" as a Multifaceted Identity through Images' in *Transcripts* (Vol. 7, July 2018), 5.

The argument I am making is assuming a broader relationship between literature, culture and societies than that defined exclusively by readership. In other words, literature can be seen as constructing (or helping to construct) the ways in which we envision and inhabit the spaces in which we live, the relationships we have, and the philosophies and beliefs we hold. In Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel* he makes the argument that " [...] by following 'what happens' [in a novel] we come up with a mental map of the many 'wheres' of which our world is made".⁷⁵ For Moretti, the novel is a particular kind of technology which helps us understand how we locate ourselves in the world, and nation, in which we live.

In addition to this, I want to emphasize the aspect of transformation that I see in Perihan Mağden's *Two Girls*⁷⁶ and Orhan Pamuk's *The Black Book*⁷⁷, as it relates to the events of Gezi but, moreover, the Spirit of Gezi. I emphasize transformation here because I see this as one of the main aspects of the Gezi Park protests, and its legacy even now. It was unique in its particular ability to transform from a local (and somewhat elite) protest to a national and popular one. This is remarkably captured in the slogan of solidarity: 'Her Yer Taksim; Her Yer Direniş' (Everywhere division; everywhere resistance) which echoed throughout June, all over the country, and again resounds into the contemporary political moment. Leaving behind the literal – after all everywhere is *not* Taksim – the slogan evokes something that goes beyond the concrete proposals set against neoliberalism, state control, environmentalism and all the other important demands. It is a slogan which echoes Moretti, proclaiming an understanding of ourselves in the world, especially in terms of where we believe we belong.

Literary Taksim

The novel, as such an important construct for helping us understand our places in the world, thus forged the dimensions of the 'spirit' of Gezi long before the protests began. Taksim and Beyoğlu are spaces of disproportionate importance in the novel, from Ottoman times onwards and it carries with it moral ambivalence, hedonism and the excesses of westernisation, on the one hand, as well as, as we see in Pamuk and Mağden, profound senses of self and belonging, rage and transformative potential. Consider this quotation from the middle of *The Black Book*:

Near Taksim he suddenly found himself inside a crowd of people leaving a movie theatre. What he read in their faces was peace: These people had been able to forget their own sadness by immersing themselves in a story [...] They can believe they're someone else!' thought Galip longingly [...]

On the other hand, to become someone else you had to use all your strength. But by the time he had reached Taksim Square, Galip knew that



⁷⁵ Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso 1998), 79.

⁷⁶ Perihan Mağden *İki Genç Kızın Romanı*, (Istanbul, Everest Yayınları 2002)

⁷⁷ Orhan Pamuk *Kara Kitap*, (Istanbul, Can Yayınları 1990)

he had – at last – the strength and determination to make his dream come true. I am someone else! He told himself. How good it felt! He felt the whole world around him changing – not just the icy pavement beneath his feet, not just the billboards [...] but his own body from head to toe.⁷⁸

This is a moment of profound transformation in the novel, right before the protagonist Galip assumes the identity of his cousin, Celal. The dichotomies Pamuk employs in the novels – crowd-individual, self-other, true-false, and fact-fiction – are all at play in this extract, typically challenging the reader to push the literal understanding of what it means to become ‘someone else’. Such play opens up a space to reclaim ‘being someone else’, not as a position of weakness – as is the case when we think of the Ottoman novel and the dandy – but rather as something that has extraordinary transformative potential to change the ‘whole world’.

Almost uncannily, *Two Girls* narrates a similar moment of transformation:

Behiye is on the street now. She’s walking. Levent, Zincirlikuyu, Mecidiyeköy, Şişli, Harbiye, Taksim. Behiye walks without stopping. She walks with tears streaming from her eyes. At the beginning of İstiklal [...] her head is buzzing so much [...] Behiye’s heart is burning. It’s on fire. She wants to cry for the blind [singer]. [...] The streets are full. The avenue is very crowded. People are bumping into each other, struggling to walk. [...] In [Taksim] square, Behiye collapses to the ground. She’s so tired, she wants to curl up and sleep right here. Behiye is so tired, she’s finished. All of the Behiyes she knows within her are finished.⁷⁹



The neighbourhoods listed in the extract are working in the passage to locate and signpost Behiye’s mood which sees her pass Gezi park, as her heart is on fire. Two significant steps occur to Behiye in this final scene of the novel. First, Behiye is ‘finished’, signalling an end, and then she is reborn as she decides to ‘rid’ the city of evil.⁸⁰ In a sense, both novels use Taksim to locate and witness the annihilation of the self and its rebirth into something or someone else. This is a far cry from the over-westernised, satirised Taksim of the Ottoman novel and, in some ways, further from the ignored morally-implicated space of the nationalist ones. This is transformation of one character into many, one person into another, just as it was one park’s protests into a nation’s. It is also the transformation of a space into a spirit.

It may well be a wide leap to consider two fictional characters, conceived almost ten years apart and years before the Gezi Protests, as anticipating an action that scholars had not or could not predict. Maybe it is easier on a theoretical level to be convincing, as Moretti has argued, that ‘where’

⁷⁸ Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book* (Kara Kitap) trans. Maureen Freely (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2006), 222.

⁷⁹ Perihan Mağden *Two Girls*, trans. Brendan Freely (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2005), 248-249.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 249.

something happens in a novel helps us understand who we are and how we connect to others. Galip and Behiye are looking for meaning as they march into Taksim. They amongst the bodies are individual as much as they are in the crowds. Mağden and Pamuk – remarkably different authors – transform Taksim, use its ambivalence and excesses to harness and transform the individual into something more and beyond. And it thus becomes possible from these extracts to see how ‘everywhere is Taksim and everything is resistance’ because, after all, Behiye and Galip walk into Taksim, firstly as they question ‘who they are’ and secondly, finding a resounding, implausible answer, ‘we are someone else’. The remarkable overlap between the terms and tone of these fictional moments in Taksim do not prove causality, but they tell us a little more about how we might define the ‘spirit of Gezi’ and how everywhere in Turkey became Taksim.



Journalists as terrorists?

The case of Turkey

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Turkey has gained notoriety in recent years as the biggest jailer of journalists in the world – outdoing China and Russia for the number behind bars in 2012 and 2013 – and regaining its title since 2016. At the same time, it has drifted down the Freedom House media freedom tables – and has been categorised as ‘not free’ since 2018. This is hard to reconcile with a state which remains in accession talks with the EU, so it is necessary to ask how it has come to be that Turkey has moved so far towards authoritarianism.

For whilst it has been recognised for some time in the literature that Turkey has become less liberal than it was in the early years of the AKP, it is now acknowledged to be well down the illiberal road and knocking on the door of oppressing any actors who do not toe the party line – including the news media. In the case of the latter, the repression necessary to stop journalists speaking truth unto power is based around categorising them as ‘terrorists’ in order to justify their persecution and prosecution. So, in sum, journalists have been categorised as terrorists in Turkey in order for the AKP to consolidate its authoritarian governance of the country.

However, whilst the story of authoritarianism in Turkey is largely about the ambitions of the AK Party in general – and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in particular – this is not the whole story. It is also the story of power struggles between and within the major factions of Turkish politics since 1980. For Turkey does not have a strong tradition of independent journalism: since the inception of the republic the state has controlled it either with ideology (Kemalism) or patronage, as many Turkish media conglomerates since the 1950s have had wider business interests linked to government contracts. This trend of state control over the media has continued in various ways since the AK Party came to power in 2002. The securitisation of journalists as ‘terrorists’ is not a new phenomenon in Turkey – as the Kurdish population will testify – and the Kemalist establishment, including the media, was complicit in the oppression of the Kurdish media in the 1990s. However, the situation has deteriorated sharply in terms of scale and intensity since the AKP’s second general election win in 2007.

After this point the Kemalist establishment – including the media – was targeted by the *Ergenekon* investigations. Whilst specifically aimed at the military – in an attempt to curb the power of the Kemalist elite and its tendency to intervene in Turkish politics – journalists were also involved in the arrests and wider ‘investigations’ which deterred many others from delving too far into *Ergenekon*’s murky underworld. Whilst it is entirely possible that some kind of ultra-Kemalist deep state operation existed, it is now reasonably clear that the AKP government’s *Ergenekon* investigations were more about curbing its opponents than unmasking real deep state operatives. Accordingly, some of the evidence for *Ergenekon* was fabricated to bolster the case against those deemed to be an obstacle to AKP – and Gülen movement – power.⁸¹ *Ergenekon* was labelled as a ‘terrorist’ organisation because of the allegations that it organised false flag terrorist incidents to provoke insecurity and justify the overthrow of the government.

The KCK – Koma Civakên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Communities Union) - trials are another instance of journalism in Turkey having become enmeshed in wider political issues. *Prima facie*, the arrest of thousands of Kurdish politicians and activists after 2009 was about curbing efforts by the PKK – Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) – to rebrand itself as a civic, rather than a terrorist, organisation. But the scale of the arrests – estimated at 4000 by the US State Department in 2011 – suggest that this was highly illiberal and about the containment of Kurdish political power more widely. Journalists were primarily targeted in the KCK prosecutions to deter open reporting of the original trials of political activists. As has been highlighted by the New York based Committee to Protect Journalists, the terrorism ‘crimes’ they were charged with were simply of doing their job. Any

⁸¹ See Gareth Jenkins, 2009, *Between Fact and Fantasy: Turkey’s Ergenekon Investigation*. Silk Road Studies Paper. Available at: https://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2009_08_SRP_Jenkins_Turkey-Ergenekon.pdf. See also Dani Rodrik and Pinar Doğan (2010) ‘Turkey’s Other Dirty War’, *The New Republic*, 24 May. Available at: <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/world/75123/turkey%E2%80%99s-other-dirty-war>

coverage of the Kurdish issue by journalists was seen to be support for the PKK and therefore 'terrorism'. In August 2012, 76 journalists were in prison in Turkey and around 70% of those – more than 50 – were Kurdish. Mainstream media had also been deterred from reporting the issues for fear of a similar fate⁸².

Hence, the Islamist establishment – the Gülen movement and the AKP – were complicit in the oppression of Kemalist and Kurdish journalists in the 2000s through the *Ergenekon* and KCK trials. This oppression was justified through the 'terrorist' tag – indeed, when organisations such as the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe began to question the figures, the AK Party government's tautologous reply was that journalists were not in jail for journalism – but terrorism. The news media was securitised as 'criminal' and/or 'terrorist' as convenient justification for the authoritarian backlash to it – imprisonment (often without trial). Many journalists were detained and prosecuted on this basis – and many others understandably self-censored to avoid the same fate – in the years when the AKP was still working in cahoots with the Gülen movement.

However, the situation has declined even further since Gülen publicly⁸³ split with the AKP in 2013. Since then the Islamist establishment, responsible for securitising Kemalist and Kurdish journalists has been riven amidst a bitter power struggle and, ironically, the Gülen movement has been subjected to a very similar authoritarian *modus operandi* it operated during *Ergenekon* and the KCK. Just as *Ergenekon* was characterised as "ETÖ" (the *Ergenekon* Terrorist Organisation) by Gülenist media, the Gülen movement has been characterised as 'FETÖ' (Fethullah Terrorist Organisation) by the AKP loyal media since early 2015. On this basis, most Gülen media outlets have been closed and journalists imprisoned. Again, the reason for this securitisation was to justify the imprisonment of journalists *en masse* – and the deterrence of many others – to stop them from highlighting injustices. The number of journalists in jail as measured by the CPJ – which acknowledges its figures may be underestimated – peaked again in 2016 at 81 following the attempted *coup d'état* in Turkey which was attributed to the Gülen movement by the AKP. This was the justification for the State of Emergency powers instigated soon after and which were used to take control of many Gülen outlets.

In conclusion, it cannot be denied that the news media has had an ambivalent relationship with pure journalistic ideals since Kemalist times for the structural reasons touched on above. It has been the oppressor and the oppressed depending on who was in power at the time. Those allied to the ruling cadre have followed a long tradition of toeing the party line and independent journalism is not widely respected in Turkey. Those who have tried to do so, such as Ahmet Sik – who has been persecuted by Kemalists, Gülenists and the AKP – have paid a heavy price just for doing his job. However, the

⁸² See Committee to Protect Journalists, August 2012, *Turkey's Press Freedom Crisis the Dark Days of Jailing Journalists and Criminalizing Dissent*. Available at: <https://cpj.org/reports/Turkey2012.English.pdf>

⁸³ This was the public split – the actual division can be traced back to around 2010.

situation is now much worse than it has ever been before and the way this has been achieved is by securitising journalists. If you can say someone is a 'terrorist', you have the power to lock them up – and the AKP has that power.

☪☪☪☪☪



The Extraordinary Life of Hannah (Fatima) Robinson

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The amazing story of Hannah (also called Fatima or Fatma) Robinson is surprisingly little known even though one of her children – remembered in Turkey as Ahmed 'Robenson' – was one of the late Ottoman Empire's most celebrated sportsmen and a pioneer of the scouting movement. Much of the available information about Hannah's life has been distorted by official propaganda, misunderstood by Turkish historians, or has been deliberately misrepresented by Ahmed Robenson himself. Nevertheless, looking back at Hannah's life, one is provided with a fascinating and unique glimpse into late Ottoman society.

The authorities in Turkey, and certain reputable Turkish historians, have perpetuated the myth that Ahmed Robenson's mother was known as 'Lady Sarah' and came from a well-to-do English family. Turkish officials were keen to propagate the line that a woman from a respectable family in Victorian England had chosen to convert to Islam and had then decided to settle in the Ottoman Empire. According to Ottoman archives, Ahmed Robenson was supposedly the product of a relationship between his mother and William Henry 'Abdullah' Quilliam, the famous Liverpool-based lawyer who became a Muslim and established one of the first mosques in late Victorian England.⁸⁵ It is not exactly clear how the Ottoman archives came to peddle this line. More recent publications on the life of Quilliam mention only in passing the lawyer's connection to Hannah.⁸⁶

In an interview he gave in 1965, shortly before his death, Ahmed Robenson boldly declared that his mother came from a family connected to that of Sir Cecil Rhodes and that her ancestors were famous in the fields of art,

⁸⁴ Unless otherwise cited, details provided in this text come from a chapter in my forthcoming book, *Whispers Across Continents: In Search of the Robinsons* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2019)

⁸⁵ This view is strongly supported, for example, by the Turkish historian, Melih Şabanoğlu.

⁸⁶ See for example, Ron Geaves, *Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam* (Markfield, Leics.: Kube Publishing, 2010), p.226.

education and literature. Ahmed Robenson had been forced to abandon Turkey and live in the United States after hard-line nationalists had thwarted his efforts to develop social and educational programmes in Ankara and Izmir with the Americans in the 1920s. He had also been suspected of working as a spy for the British when serving as the official interpreter for the short-lived South-West Caucasus government established in Kars in 1919. Perhaps still frustrated and disillusioned with how he had been treated and how his life had unfolded, Robenson may have intentionally spun this narrative about the supposed elevated origins of his mother to secure a measure of revenge against officialdom in Turkey.

In reality, Hannah Rodda – note the similarity of the family’s name with that of ‘Rhodes’ – was born in the slums of London’s east end in the last quarter of 1854. Her mother was the daughter of a bricklayer and her father was a merchant seaman who had died when Hannah was an infant. As a young child, Hannah spent a period of time in the local workhouse with her widowed mother. While working as a housemaid for one of Queen Victoria’s personal physicians, Hannah gave birth to an ‘illegitimate’ daughter, Gertrude. Hannah’s offspring would later become famous as a racing motor cyclist and motor car rally driver in Wilhelmine Germany. In 1880, Hannah herself married a tea farmer who was living in India. Spencer Robinson was originally a tenant farmer from East Keal in Lincolnshire, who had migrated to Bengal in the mid-1870s after the tragic early death of his first wife. Hannah and Spencer raised a family in the foothills of the Himalayas. After her husband’s death in 1889, she returned to England to run a superior boarding house on Regency Square in Brighton. In 1891, Hannah converted to Islam, adopted the name Fatima, married a supposed Afghan warlord named Dr Gholab Shah at Quilliam’s mosque in Liverpool, and migrated to Constantinople with her new husband and young children.

Hannah’s second marriage was a disaster. Her husband, who was actually an Indian oculist known as Eliahie Bosche, was a scoundrel and a charlatan who squandered her savings and repeatedly threatened to use violence against her and her children. Trapped for long periods in a hotel room in a foreign land, and with little knowledge of Ottoman Turkish, the resourceful Hannah was amazingly able to secure a divorce from Bosche and gain financial support from the Ottoman Sultan, Abdülhamid II. In June 1892 she had first penned a letter to the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Ahmed Cevat Pasha. In her missive, Hannah cleverly intimated that she was on good terms with Quilliam, who at that time was establishing a close working relationship with the sultan.⁸⁷ Quilliam would later become the sultan’s personal representative in Britain – titled the *Sheikh al-Islam* of Britain. After writing to the grand vizier, Hannah wrote two letters pleading to the office of the Prime Minister in London. Having surprisingly succeeded in securing funds from the sultan after contacting Ahmed Cevat



⁸⁷ A. Ebru Akcasu, ‘Migrants to Citizens: An Evaluation of the Expansionist Features of Hamidian Ottomanism, 1876-1909,’ *Die Welt des Islams*, 56, 3-4 (2016), p.411.

Pasha, Hannah then urged the British government to lobby on her behalf so that she could receive further money from the Ottoman ruler. Arguing that she came “from a civilised European family” used to “civilised refinement”, Hannah brazenly declared that she was willing to be of service to the sultan “being practical, energetic and from England” and hoped that “his Majesty will attach me to his family in this way.”

The authorities in London were faced with a delicate situation. This was a time when Britain was keen to maintain close ties with the Ottoman Empire given that Tsarist Russia’s ambitions in Afghanistan threatened British interests in India. There had been intelligence reports which had falsely suggested that the so-called Dr Gholab Shah was seeking to promote Russian imperial aims at the expense of the British. Concerning Hannah and her children specifically, the Foreign Office noted that she was “very lucky” to be receiving anything from the sultan and if the British ambassador were to argue for more support this could work to Hannah’s disadvantage. It seems that Hannah was attempting to play both the British and Ottoman authorities. The Foreign Office noted that, while Hannah lived as a Muslim and wished to remain in Constantinople, she was still a British subject. At the same time, the Ottoman



State had demonstrated that it was prepared to give generous welfare support to a single and destitute woman who had previously converted to Islam.

Although the British were reluctant to intervene on her behalf, Hannah succeeded in obtaining continuing financial aid from the Ottoman State. Before winning the divorce case, her daughter Maud (also known as Adile) had been placed in the temporary safekeeping of the household of Mustafa Zeki Pasha, the Field Marshal of the Imperial Arsenal of Ordnance and Artillery. Mustafa Zeki Pasha was one of the sultan’s most trusted generals who was also in charge of the military schools in the Empire. Three of Hannah’s sons, including Ahmed Robenson, would receive free education at the prestigious Kuleli military college in Constantinople. Unwilling to see her sons graduate as military officers, upon Hannah’s request the boys were later transferred to the Galatasaray High School. In spite of her serious marital problems, Hannah had been quick to establish ties with leading and influential Ottoman personalities. She was apparently on good terms with the wife of the grand vizier and also somehow knew well ‘Kurt’ Ismail Pasha, a former army commander and one-time governor of Diyarbakir. Probably sometime in 1894, Hannah married Ahmed Bahri, one of the sultan’s dashing young military officers who would shortly distinguish himself in the Greco-Ottoman War of 1897. The couple would have one child, Fevzi. In the following years, Hannah became well-known to the officials working at the sultan’s palaces at Yıldız and Dolmabahçe, while the British embassy at Constantinople still knew her as Mrs Robinson.

Hannah appeared to flourish in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. The Bahris were part of the official welcoming committee when Quilliam and his wife were received in Constantinople in May 1898. They were in good company. Other invitees included Mustafa Zeki Pasha, Woods Pasha (Henry Felix Woods), the Vice-Admiral of the Ottoman Fleet who served in effect as the sultan's public relations advisor, and İbrahim Hakkı Pasha, the Principal Legal Councillor to the Sublime Porte and later grand vizier. The Bahris were also present to see off the Quilliams. In a departing ceremony, Hannah's father-in-law, Captain Mustafa Effendi, presented Quilliam with a portrait which had quotations from the Koran in Turkish.

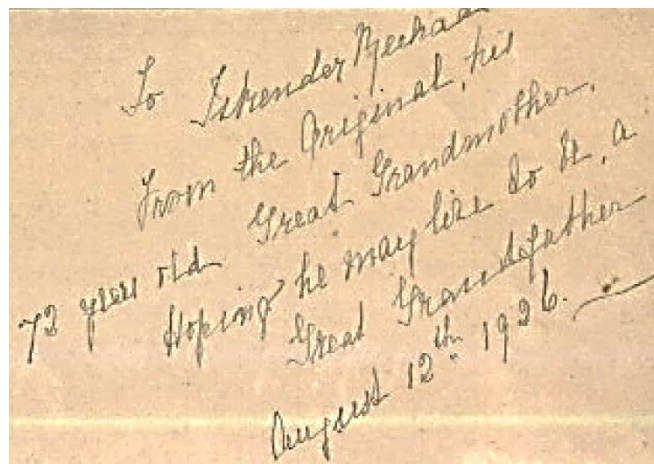


The Bahris were given rent-free accommodation by the Ottoman State. They lived at number 107 Akaretler, very near to the Dolmabahçe Palace. This was a most prestigious address. Properties on Akaretler were rented out at

exorbitantly high rates. Abdülhamid's court painter, Fausto Zonaro, resided nearby at number 50. Many of the apartment buildings on the street were occupied by high-level government officials, bureaucrats and diplomats. The street, running up from the Bosphorus, was the centre of high society and cultural life in the Ottoman capital.

At one time the Ottoman authorities attempted to claim rent payment from the Bahris. The family were informed that they owed the substantial sum of 90,750 Kuruş in back-payments. Hannah immediately addressed a petition to government officials reminding them of the terms by which the accommodation was provided free of charge. The authorities quickly backed down. A letter of apology, dated 12 February 1907 and signed by the Ottoman Minister of Finance himself, Mehmed Ziya Pasha, was forwarded to Hannah. Presumably, this beneficial arrangement concerning the property on Akaretler came to an end after the deposition of the sultan in April 1909 in the aftermath of the so-called Young Turk Revolution.

In her later years, and after the death of Ahmed Bahri around 1920, Hannah retreated from public view. Nevertheless, as a mother, grandmother, and great grandmother, Hannah remained a formidable figure within her immediate family. Beds had to be made immaculately. Young girls in the family were addressed formally as Hanım. Hannah's



youngest son, Fevzi, even as an adult, stood to attention like a soldier when encountering his mother. By the late 1920s, Hannah had re-located to Izmir. She spent her final years living in the district of Buca, an area populated by the then still thriving British community in the port city. In what was a highly unusual practice for the time, Hannah decided to have a number of visiting cards printed for herself. 'Fatma R.B. Kövi – the widow of the deceased Colonel Ahmed Bahri' was printed on the cards. The two initials probably referred to Robinson or Rodda and Bahri, but the use of the name 'Kövi' remains a mystery.

The death of 'Fatma Robenson-Bahri' was announced briefly in a Turkish newspaper in May 1948. According to Ahmed Robenson, his mother was buried in Üsküdar on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, although members of the family do not know the precise location of the grave.

Hannah's life was certainly an extraordinary one. One may not necessarily warm to her as a person, but one can only have admiration for her courage, resourcefulness and sheer resilience. She was a risk-taker and a survivor par excellence. In spite of her humble origins and lack of education, here was someone who was able to emerge unscathed from a disastrous marriage and more than hold her own in late Ottoman society by cultivating close ties with prominent politicians and leading personalities of the day. Her impassioned entreaties clearly had an impact on the sultan. Government officials and her son did attempt to re-package Hannah's life and make her story ostensibly more glamorous and appealing. But, in the case of Hannah/Fatima, fact was certainly stranger than fiction. The actual life of Hannah Robinson was one which was truly remarkable.



Aleppo: The Citadel, from Henry Maundrell, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter*, A. D. 1697 (Oxford: At the Theater, 1703).

OTTOMAN ALEPPO THROUGH BRITISH EYES

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Part 1

Among the oldest continuously inhabited urban areas, with origins dating at least as far back as 5000 BCE, Aleppo is substantially older than Damascus and was, until the devastations of the continuing civil war, the most populous city in Syria. By the opening of the second millennium BCE, Aleppo 'was already a major market center ... when the archives of the Hittites and of those of the kingdom of Mari recorded its name as Halab or Khalappa.'⁸⁹ However, the arrival of the Ottomans in 1516 transformed the city from a regional trading centre into a major international entrepôt. Ottoman investment in the city attracted foreign trade: in 1545, the Venetians moved their consul here from Damascus; the French arrived in 1557 and, with the establishment of the English Levant Company after 1583, Aleppo became the headquarters of British trade until the Company was dissolved in 1825.

This paper explores how British visitors represented the transformation of the ancient city during the Ottoman era, and suggests some of the ways that the presence of British residents in Aleppo contributed to the city's cultural activities, social and religious character, and economic growth. British merchants resident in Aleppo greatly increased the city's commercial wealth and prosperity. They were accompanied by chaplains who introduced Protestantism to the city. They set about alterations to the buildings in which they lived and worked. They supported a substantial wine-producing business, introduced the eating of beef, imported sea-fish, introduced hunting in imitation of fox-hunting, and founded a Masonic lodge. At the same time, they commented on the prosperity of the city, its population, its buildings and gardens. Following the dissolution of the Levant Company in 1825, later British travellers commented on the apparent decline of the city's infrastructure and the decline of trade.

'What is Aleppo?' Back in 2016, on Thursday 8th September, during a live interview on early morning television, US presidential candidate Gary Johnson was asked 'What would you do, if you were elected, about Aleppo?' Johnson's response, 'What is Aleppo?' rapidly hashtagged its way across the twittersphere, while the Youtube clip of the incident reached close on a million views by the end of that year. What was less well noticed, but perhaps even more alarming, was how the *New York Times* was swiftly obliged to publish corrections to its own first report of the incident, which had claimed that Aleppo was not only the capital of Syria, but also the *de facto* capital of Islamic State.⁹⁰ Ignorant politicians are nothing new, but one might wish for greater accuracy from what used to be the most reliable news outlet in the United States.

⁸⁹ Bruce Masters, 'Aleppo: The Ottoman Empire's Caravan City,' in Ethem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 17-78; this reference p. 19.

⁹⁰ "'What is Aleppo?' Gary Johnson Asks, in an Interview Stumble,' *The New York Times* (8 September 2016), online edition at <www.nytimes.com/2016/09/09/us/politics/gary-johnson-alepp.html> last accessed 2 December 2018.



Ignorance in the case of Aleppo is not simply not-knowing, but – as Mohammed Sakhnini recently argued in relation to British attitudes to the city – it is also a problem of regular forgetting. Sakhnini argues that rhetoric used during the debates leading up to the 2016 referendum over Britain leaving the European Union involved not only scaremongering but also what he calls ‘a sense of historical amnesia regarding Britain’s long history of being in the world, particularly the longstanding relationships and interactions between Britain and the Middle East that extend beyond the narrow fear of Islam and Muslims.’ Like Sakhnini, I wish to ‘rethink this historical amnesia’ and show how current fears in Britain of ‘Islam and Muslim refugees’ involve a great deal of forgetting of what he terms the ‘previous cosmopolitan encounters’ experienced by Britons travelling and residing in Syria.⁹¹ Eighteenth-century Britons, he argues, ‘found in Aleppo a cosmopolitan space’ where they experienced ‘Enlightenment toleration, sociability, and living in peace’ not only with the Catholic French and Italian merchant communities, but also with Muslim and Jewish residents of the city. While Sakhnini focuses exclusively on eighteenth-century Aleppo, a longer historical survey from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries both complements and complicates his version of events. Most importantly, a longer perspective indicates how those ‘cosmopolitan encounters,’ and the ‘sociability’ that made them possible, were symptoms of what architectural historian Heghnar Watenpaugh has identified as ‘Ottoman adaptability.’ What Watenpaugh finds characteristic of Ottoman architectural developments – this ‘adaptability’ – also holds true, I will suggest, for the numerous ways in which the British presence in Aleppo influenced the social, material and cultural life of the city.

By the time the English Levant Company established its presence after 1583 – to be the headquarters of British trade until the Company was dissolved in 1825 – new mosques and other public buildings in the Ottoman style had appeared, altering the sky line and declaring the power of the Ottoman sultan. From the imperial centre of Istanbul, Watenpaugh argues, the leading Ottoman architect, Mimar Sinan, had established a standard of Ottoman urban style – a ‘recognizable Ottoman design capable of being replicated

⁹¹ Mohammad Sakhnini, ‘In the Eyes of Some Britons: Aleppo, an Enlightenment City,’ *Journeys* 18: 2 (2017): 44-64; citing p. 45.

efficiently in the provinces...a canon for Ottoman architecture.⁹² Throughout the sixteenth century, she argues, peripheral and provincial imperatives such as 'local contexts, available materials and skilled labour,' meant that mosques adopted standardized features (domes, minarets) while 'subsidiary elements' (baths, soup kitchens, schools, khans, and caravansaries) followed 'local visual repertoires.'⁹³ In provincial cities such as Aleppo, the centralizing stylistic modes of the imperial metropolis were adapted to the pragmatic imperatives and traditional practices of peripheral regions. Under the Ottomans, the ancient city of Aleppo was rebuilt and reconfigured to create a distinctly Ottoman urban space.

Andrea Soldi (c. 1703-1771),
'Portrait of a Merchant of the Levant Company in Turkish dress;
a View of Aleppo Beyond' (c. 1733-36)



However, this process was not, as in Istanbul and Damascus, directed by sultanic decree, but through the energies and designs of elite patrons who paid for new buildings and who established foundations (*waqf*) to pay for their upkeep. The most important among these patrons – notably Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (1506-1579) and Merzifonlu Kara Mustafa Pasha (1634-1683) – were products of the *devşirme* and consequently not entitled to own property unlike the city's established pre-Ottoman *ulema* (religious leaders) and *eşraf* families (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) who monopolized control over existing *waqfs*.⁹⁴ The result was a constantly variable series of compromises that shaped the process of design and construction that modified metropolitan imperial styles by adapting them to fit local circumstances and requirements.

In Ottoman Aleppo indigenous and foreign imperatives, backed up by commercial power, were in constant negotiation with the imperial centre. Watenpaugh argues that this pattern of adaptability and compromise, characteristic of urban developments in the city's built structures, also gave shape and substance to fluctuating social and cultural norms. From the late sixteenth until the early nineteenth century, the presence of resident British merchants in Aleppo contributed to key architectural, commercial, cultural, and social transformations of the city in specific and demonstrable ways. As social historian Abraham Marcus observes, while Aleppo was subject to external influences such as international trade and the vagaries of Ottoman rule, the city was also 'more exposed to European contacts than most other

⁹² Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 7.

⁹³ Watenpaugh, *Image of an Ottoman City*, pp. 9-11.

⁹⁴ See Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, 'In the Image of Rum: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in Sixteenth-century Aleppo and Damascus,' *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 70-96.

places in the Middle East,' most especially the 'Western consuls and missionaries who cultivated local followings among the non-Muslims.'⁹⁵

The earliest British merchants to visit Aleppo seem to have been aware only of the importance of commerce and of the many different nations trading there. It was in Aleppo in 1553 that the adventurer Anthony Jenkinson famously received a special trading licence signed by none other than Süleyman the Magnificent.⁹⁶ Thirty years later, in 1583, merchants of the English Turkey Company – later the Levant Company – formally established residence there.⁹⁷ In May that year the merchant adventurers John Newberry, Ralph Fitch, and John Eldred passed through Aleppo on their way to India, but only Eldred took any notice of the city. He observed:

This is the greatest place of traffique for a dry towne that is in all those parts: for hither resort Jews, Tartarians, Persians, Armenians, Egyptians, Indians, and many sorts of Christians, and injoy freedome of their consciences, and bring thither many kinds of rich marchandises. In the middest of this towne also standeth a goodly castle raised on high, with a garrison of foure or five hundred Janisaries. Within foure miles round about are goodly gardens and vineyards and trees, which beare goodly fruit neere unto the rivers side, which is but small; the walls are about three English miles in compasse, but the suburbs are almost as much more. The towne is greatly peopled.⁹⁸

Such was the immediate importance of the Aleppo trade to English merchants that twenty years later the traveller Richard Wrag commented that, 'because it is so well knowne to most of our nation I omitted to write of [it].'⁹⁹ (The Venetian ambassador to Persia, Giosofat Barbaro, had said the same thing a century before.¹⁰⁰)

Nevertheless, generations of British visitors to Aleppo would continue to describe the city and its commerce as if for the first time. Only a year after Wrag, Fynes Moryson arrived in late June 1596 and recorded how 'The Trafficke in this place is exceeding great, so as the goods of all Asia and the Eastern Ilands are brought hither, or to Cayro in Egypt.' Moryson also noticed how the English merchants lived in 'three houses, as it were in Colledges' where they enjoyed 'plentifull diet, good lodging, and most friendly conversation ... drinke excellent wines,' and where he was 'most courteously entertained' at no cost to himself.¹⁰¹ The luxurious life of the Turkey merchant

⁹⁵ Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 1989), p. 7.

⁹⁶ Reproduced in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations: Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589; rpt. 8 vols. London: Dent, 1910), 3: 36-38.

⁹⁷ See Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (1935; rpt. London, 1964), pp. 15, 75-6.

⁹⁸ Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* 3.323; brief comments by Newberry and Fitch can be found at 3: 271-2, 3: 282.

⁹⁹ Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*, 4: 14.

¹⁰⁰ Cited by Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East: The Impact of the Islamic World on Venetian Architecture 1100-1500* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 21.

¹⁰¹ Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell* (1617; rpt. 4 vols. Glasgow: Maclehose, 1907), 2: 60, 2: 59.

was starting to take shape in circumstances that were to remain exclusively male – ‘monastical or academic’ – until well into the eighteenth century.¹⁰²

By the end of the seventeenth century, British travellers and residents had settled on a number of set topics when writing about Aleppo that would recur throughout the next two centuries: the centrality of internal and international commerce; catalogues of the many foreign nations; contrasts with Damascus and Cairo; descriptions of the stone buildings; remarks on the religious freedom, diversity of faiths, languages and cultures; observations on the pleasures of companionship in an exclusively male space – with regular comparisons to life in an academic college; comments on the opportunities for touristic excursions and social life among the European community; accounts of the local food and drink, and opinions on whether or not to adopt local costume. In other words, most British writers either focussed on describing how the city and living there differed from life in Britain, or how it offered unexpected pleasures and opportunities unavailable in Britain. And, with a few notable exceptions, they seemed blithely unaware that others had said these things before them. What they were less prone to comment on, or in some cases, even to notice, was how their very presence in Aleppo was an important factor in the city’s architectural, social and cultural development.



There is, however, ample evidence of how modifications to the built structures in which the British lived and worked enabled forms of sociability that would otherwise not have developed among the indigenous inhabitants. Writing in the eighteenth century, the Scottish surgeon and long-term resident of Aleppo, Patrick Russell observed how ‘from their first establishment, ‘Europeans in Aleppo’ lodged in some of the principal khans’ within the Al-Madina Suq, a gated and partially covered market area situated within the walled city centre.¹⁰³ The earliest British merchants resided in the **Khan al-Gümrük**, while the first consuls lived in the adjacent Khan al-Burghul.¹⁰⁴ Constructed by Sokullu Mehmed Pasha starting in 1574, these two-storey rectilinear structures were

¹⁰² Gwilym Ambrose, ‘English Traders at Aleppo (1658-1756),’ *Economic History Review* 3 (1931): 246-67; see 264-5.

¹⁰³ Alexander and Patrick Russell, *The Natural History of Aleppo. Containing A Description of the City, and the Principal Natural Productions in its Neighbourhood. Together with An Account of the Climate, Inhabitants, and Diseases; Particularly of the Plague*, 2nd edition, edited and enlarged by Patrick Russell (London: Robinson, 1794), 1: 19. I have used the second edition throughout since all the material cited in this paper belongs to the later edition and is clearly Patrick’s work. For a recent account of the Russells, see Janet Starkey, *The Scottish Enlightenment Abroad: The Russells of Braidshaw in Aleppo and on the Coast of Coromandel* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

¹⁰⁴ For the Khan al-Burghul, see John Sanderson, *The Travels of John Sanderson in the Levant, 1584-1602*, ed. William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1931), p. 167, and William Biddulph, *The Travels of certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bithnia, Thracia, and to the Blacke Sea* (London: Aspley, 1609), p. 42; and see Janet Starkey, ‘The Continuity of Social Space: Khan al-Jumruk within the Bazaars of Aleppo,’ in Mohammad Gharipour, ed.,

conventionally built around a central courtyard or piazza and were soon modified by their expatriate inhabitants. In 1632, court records show that the English were continuing to expand their presence in the city as they 'carried out a renovation in the Khan al-Kharratin.'¹⁰⁵ Writing a century later, Russell explained how the original Ottoman design was adapted by the British residents to provide closed, private spaces where dinner and drinking parties could be discreetly held: 'The piazza being walled up, large windows in the European fashion are made towards the court; the floors are neatly paved with stone, or marble; and the apartments enlarged, and handsomely fitted up. The warehouses are on the ground floor.'¹⁰⁶ It would have been in such an apartment that, on 4 May 1676, the resident chaplain Henry Teonge 'and twelve Englishmen more' enjoyed 'entertainment for princes' thanks to the generosity of an English merchant, one Mr Trench.¹⁰⁷

Although the khans were initially allocated by the city authorities to the various nations trading in the city, the numbers of resident merchants grew such that eventually 'European merchants were also free to rent houses,'¹⁰⁸ and these, having flat roofs, were subject to a further innovation. Again, Russell explains: 'The Franks who live contiguous have doors of communication, and by means of their own and the bazaar terraces can make a large circuit without descending into the street; an agreeable convenience in times of the plague.' But, he continues: 'The natives have no intercourse by the terrace.'¹⁰⁹ Thus, in Watenpaugh's words, the British and other Europeans 'transformed and inhabited [the city] according to their own practices of space,' with the result that within the *suq*, the central corridor dividing the khans 'became an exceptional urban space, extraterritorial to the rest of the city ... a space of uncommon openness, a place of encounter.'¹¹⁰ The point of contrast was to the suburban neighbourhoods outside the city walls where the local Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities lived and mixed among themselves, but seldom had dealings with the European merchants beyond what trade required. Sakhnini celebrates this space of 'uncommon openness' to mark out eighteenth-century Aleppo as a 'cosmopolitan city,' where 'Europeans were free to mix among themselves and pursue their European habits with no Muslim intervention in their affairs.'¹¹¹ But life was not always so equable, especially in the early years when Europeans were first arriving.

The Bazaar in the Islamic City: Design, Culture, and History (Cairo: University of Cairo Press, 2012): 0000.

¹⁰⁵ Michele Lamprakos, 'Life in the Khans: The Venetians in Early Ottoman Aleppo,' *Muqarnas* 34 (2017): 125-56; this passage p. 146. See also Jean-Claude David and Thierry Grandin, 'L'habitat permanent des grands commercants dans les khans d'Alep a l'epoque ottoman,' in Daniel Panzac, ed., *Les Villes dans l'Empire ottoman: Activites et Societes* 2 vols (Paris: CNRS, 1991-94): 2: 19.

¹⁰⁶ Russell, *Natural History*, 1: 20.

¹⁰⁷ Henry Teonge, *The Diary of Henry Teonge*, ed. G. E. Manwaring (London: Routledge, 1927), p. 146.

¹⁰⁸ Lamprakos, 'Life in the Khans,' p. 129.

¹⁰⁹ Russell, *Natural History*, 1: 34.

¹¹⁰ Watenpaugh, *Image of an Ottoman City*, pp. 57-58. On suburban life in eighteenth-century Aleppo, see Marcus, *Middle East*, chaps 8 and 9.

¹¹¹ Sakhnini, 'In the Eyes of Some Britons,' pp. 48, 59.

Passing through Aleppo in 1599 en route to the Safavid court with the notorious Anthony Shirley, George Manwaring reports how, walking on the street one day, he was seized by the ear by 'a Turk, a gallant man he seemed to be by his habit,' and paraded through the city 'for the space of one hour, with much company following me, and some spitting on me; so, at the last, he let me go and because I would not laugh at my departure from him, he gave me such a blow with a staff, that did strike me to the ground.' On returning to the consul's house, Manwaring describes how 'the Consul's Janizary, seeing me all bloody, asked me how I came hurt.' On being told, the janissary sought out the culprit and proceeded to bastinado him 'so that he was not able to go or stand.'¹¹² Manwaring may well have wandered too far from the commercial centre where the Europeans lived and traded in relative safety, but even here problems could arise in the early years. In 1603, chaplain William Biddulph records how one William Martin, while 'sleeping on the *Tarras* (that is, on the top of the house) ... had his throat cut' by robbers who had climbed up a ladder.¹¹³ The unfortunate Martin happened to be sleeping on the roof of a house rented by James Staper, the younger brother of Richard Staper, one of the 'great London merchants of the time,'¹¹⁴ and charter member of the Levant and East India Companies.¹¹⁵ Eventually, the inner city where Europeans lived was gated and the streets patrolled at night.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, Patrick Russell recalled in 1794 how 'an aversion to the Franks, as enemies of the true believers, is certainly not imaginary,' inspiring women and children to sing insulting songs when Europeans pass by.¹¹⁷ As late as 1805, the Scottish physician and explorer Julius Griffiths reported how Europeans were commonly insulted on the streets of Aleppo.¹¹⁸ In general, however, so long as the activities of the British and other European residents remained confined to private spaces outside the public domain, they were generally tolerated or ignored.

To be continued.

¹¹² George Manwaring, 'A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley's Travel into Persia, what accidents did happen in the way, both going thither and returning back; with the business he was employed in from the Sophi,' in E. Denison Ross, ed., *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure, including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: Routledge, 1933), pp. 175-226; this passage pp. 183-4.

¹¹³ Biddulph, *Travels*, p. 59.

¹¹⁴ Wood, *History*, p. 7.

¹¹⁵ On Richard Staper and his younger brother James, see T. S. Willan, *Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade* (1959; rpt. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), pp. 191-3.

¹¹⁶ Marcus, *Middle East*, p. 22.

¹¹⁷ Russell, *Natural History*, 1: 216.

¹¹⁸ Julius Griffiths, *Travels in Europe, Asia Minor and Arabia* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1805), p. 338.

BORDERLANDS: FROM VAN INTO GEORGIA, SUMMER 2019

by **John Moreton**



I hadn't thought that the 'pay-as-you-feel' concept had arrived in Turkey before my taxi driver deposited me at Antalya Airport early that morning at the end of July. In response to my enquiry about the fare the wily old Pamphylian simply grinned and said, "*Ver... fark etmez*" (Give [whatever you want]...It doesn't matter). So I paid him what I had expected to pay, and we both went on our separate ways rejoicing. Mine was to check-in for a domestic flight to Van in Turkey's 'far east', by courtesy of Sun Express, a lovechild of Turkish Airlines and Lufthansa. This was in order to save both time and physical strain, given the distance involved, and in fact represented the end of the beginning, as it were, of my whole trip undertaken over a three-week period from late July to mid-August. I had already flown to Kos for the initial weekend, then crossed over to Bodrum and continued my journey by bus to spend a few days inland at Pamukkale and Burdur, in the Turkish lake district, before descending again to the coast at Antalya. Kos, Bodrum and Pamukkale/Hierapolis were places I had last visited briefly and superficially during my student days in the early 1970s, with only vague memories still in my head; now it was wonderful to see them all more thoroughly – and also the more fully excavated and illustrated major sites of Laodicea and Aphrodisias in the Denizli area. A visit with a local taxi driver from Burdur to the nearby İnsuyu caves and yet another major site at Sagalassos also proved very enjoyable and worthwhile.

But now it was time to move eastwards, given that my overall travel plan was to visit first certain places in southwest Turkey and then to spend a few days around Lake Van before travelling through the far northeast and then into Georgia. I had already been to Batumi, now Georgia's principal Black Sea resort, in 2016 and now wanted to spend a week or so seeing more of the country. I also had an offer of accommodation in Tbilisi from an academic contact, a professor of Georgian language and linguistics at the university

there. So the two-hour flight from Antalya's impressive airport that morning now whisked me across many miles of fascinating Anatolian territory to Van, a destination not on very many people's 'see-before-you-die' bucket list. For getting the best views I was probably on the right side of the aircraft – that is, in a window seat on the left side – as we started our descent over the eerie expanse of Lake Van towards the airport at the eastern end; but in the morning the outlook was a bit hazy, so the views of Mount Süphan on the north side of the lake would no doubt have been better later in the day. A few minutes later we were back on the ground at Van's Ferit Melen Airport.

Ferit Melen: a name to conjure with, since I remembered that this native son of Van had, after a career as a distinguished civil servant, become one of those many prime ministers of Turkey who came and went under the eye of the military in the early 1970s. It was in that turbulent period that I and a companion had, after working for six weeks on the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara's excavations around the (now submerged) village of Aşvan near Elazığ, decided we simply had to venture a bit further east and investigate vestiges of the ancient Urartian civilization around Lake Van. So we had travelled for a few days from Tatvan at the western end along the northern side of the lake and eventually to the town of Van itself before setting off back to Ankara in a series of long and arduous bus journeys (those ones of yore during which you could be summoned to chat to the driver, while many other passengers smoked like chimneys). That was all nearly half a century ago, and life had got in the way of my interest in revisiting that particular region of Turkey, especially certain highlights such as the Armenian church on the island of Akdamar.

Now, as I made my way out of the airport, I spotted but ignored a notice calling on me to hand in my firearm (I think it was intended for departing travellers, actually) and strode purposefully towards the waiting taxis. After a short ride with a friendly, welcoming driver I entered the lobby of my selected hotel conveniently close to the centre of the city, and the first thing I noticed there was the large group of Iranian visitors clustered in front of the television set that was blaring out the news on an Iranian channel. My *Rough Guide to Turkey* had correctly, as it turned out, mentioned that the main reason for the large number of hotels in Van was that the city (and its surrounding area) attracts a steady flow of visitors from nearby Iran 'keen to leave behind the strictures of the Islamic Republic' (mainly in summer, I presume). I expected to see and possibly also to chat to some of them later on in the evening, but when that came around there was – disappointingly – no sign of them in the public part of the hotel. Many Iranians could nonetheless be spotted in the streets and around the entrances to many other hotels in the evenings; and I noticed plenty of commercial invitations in Farsi as I wandered the streets of central Van. I had in fact suggested meeting up in Van with an old Iranian friend who had been deported from the UK some years ago, but in the end he felt unable to come because of his financial circumstances.

The present-day city (and provincial capital) of Van, with a population of something approaching 500,000, lies about 4 kms inland from the eastern

shore of the eponymous lake and, though hardly beautiful, seems to have recovered quite well from the severe earthquakes that struck it in the autumn of 2011. The name of the area apparently is derived from an old Urartian place-name, and Van has a very ancient history of settlement, having been once the Urartian capital Tushpa and later the centre of the Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan. In the late afternoon of my first day there I travelled westwards out of the city to revisit one of the main local highlights, the strange and impressive citadel rock near the lake which rises (very steeply on the southern side) straight out of an otherwise flat immediate landscape and is known as



Van Kalesi. It was one of those memorable places I had first experienced nearly half a century earlier. It was getting a bit late in the day to buy a ticket to do a full exploration of the citadel, but as I wandered along admiring the views of the northern face of the rock in the bright evening sun I could see figures still moving around on the summit.

Before that I had got off the minibus at the entrance to a park at the eastern end, and had noticed that the official municipal noticeboard there offered its message in Kurdish as well as Turkish. I guessed that many or most of the people sitting and enjoying picnics amongst the trees were Kurds. The present population of Van is indeed reckoned to be at least two-thirds Kurdish, and in due course I was to find in the city centre a couple of tea gardens with Kurdish names (one, for example, honouring the 16th/17th century poet Feqiyê Teyran). Near the official entrance to *Van Kalesi* on that initial visit I happened to meet Harun Toprak, a Kurdish man who confided that he was mentioned in the *Rough Guide*, had his own new hotel back in Van and could take me on a guided day trip to some places in the area. He kindly gave me a lift back to base, and the next morning I met and sat with him in the sunshine in the lively back street just outside his Toprak Hotel, conveniently near mine and evidently catering mainly to Iranian guests. As we sipped tea and I sampled the local breakfast speciality *otlu peynir* (cheese studded with wild herbs), we discussed (between Harun's phone calls) a tour we could do that included the standard visit to the summit of *Van Kalesi* late that afternoon before sunset and then certain places to the south of Van the following day.



Having agreed to this plan, I then decided to follow up what seemed an interesting suggestion from the *Rough Guide* about a walk from the harbour (*iskele*) of Van along a newly-constructed dirt road beside the lakeshore towards the rock citadel (where I would meet Harun later on). As I sat in the minibus travelling on the long, straight road out to the harbour with this plan in mind I was pleasantly surprised when a youngish lady in full black conservative garb who had just come aboard chose to sit next to me, even

though other seats were available. We began a conversation in Turkish and, after I had explained the main and more obvious reasons for my returning to Van after so many years, she asked me whether there were any other things that appealed to me about the area. So I did my best to refer to the warmth and friendliness of the local people, the special kinds of food on offer, *etcetera*; and when she said goodbye and got off shortly afterwards I was left with a strange but pleasant feeling of having made some kind of real and unexpected human contact.

A short while later, after a quick lunch overlooking the harbour, I was on my way southwards along the raised dirt track, with the lakeshore to my right, marshes and pastures with sheep, cattle and gagging geese to my left, and the fascinating, ever-changing profile of the Van citadel rock away in the distance. Eventually I stood in line with its western end, descended from the track to cross a meadow and then found myself entering the highly atmospheric and lonely area below the precipitous southern face of the rock. This rubble-strewn place with the remains of just a handful of buildings still standing was the site of Old Van, once a walled settlement built in the Ottoman period that had been a thriving home and business centre to one of the largest populations in Anatolia, probably about two thirds of it Armenian. It had been a place where both Muslims and Christians had lived together; but then it was destroyed in 1915. Today, writes Diana Darke in her Bradt guide to *Eastern Turkey*, 'it must be one of the most vivid examples anywhere in the world of a town which has been quite literally razed to the ground, and nothing you will have read can prepare you for the total devastation here.' A better general view of this whole devastated area, and also of the modern city of Van away to the east, is available from the summit of the citadel rock. I and my guide Harun had arranged to meet again at the ticket booth a couple of hours or so before sunset and then had sweated up the paths on the gentler northern side to appreciate these views as well as to visit some of the more accessible Urartian and Ottoman remains found there.

The next day was my last based in Van and, as agreed, Harun drove me south to visit three main places that I had wanted to visit or revisit (and which were in any case on his standard tour of the area). Our first stop was at the celebrated Urartian royal palace site of Çavuştepe, dating from the 8th century BC and typically occupying a rocky spur overlooking a plain. Here two of the most remarkable features are the perfectly cut blocks of basalt masonry and the huge cisterns that were part of an extraordinarily advanced water supply system. All the while – indeed throughout the day – Harun was busy fielding calls from those on reception duty at his hotel back in Van, or from pesky Iranians trying to make or alter a booking. A bit further east, going towards the Hakkâri region, our next brief visit was to the dramatically sited castle of Hoşap, built for a 17th-century Kurdish leader and perched above a village with a fine specimen of an Ottoman bridge of that period.

For me, however, it was the final destination on our tour that had the greatest 'pull': this was the 10th-century Church of the Holy Cross on Akdamar Island, built by King Gagik to be the cathedral church of Vaspurakan. I had been there in 1971, and had managed to get a splendid photograph of the church and the mountains beyond in the very late afternoon before rushing back to the little jetty to catch the last boat back to the shore.



How romantic it had all seemed then (though I see that the *Fodor* Guide to Turkey in 1971 – often a source of amusement as well as information – was unusually bland and restrained in calling the church simply 'one of the most exquisite architectural treats in the vicinity'). As we approached the island in perfect weather aboard the boat from the lakeside settlement of Gevaş the smart phone cameras were operating in overdrive; never mind Versailles or Venice, even here in deepest Vaspurakan it was a challenge to get any photograph that didn't include other people taking photographs... You'll know what I mean.

Many of my fellow day-trippers were apparently from Iran, and some may even have been Armenians. Back in 2007 the Turkish Government made a significant and worthy contribution towards both cultural heritage conservation and Turkish-Armenian relations by completing a very costly project to restore the church which, although certainly not in perfect condition, does boast its famous exterior relief carvings depicting Biblical scenes and characters such as David and Goliath and Jonah and the Whale. Having looked all around, and inside as well, I took the opportunity in the remaining allotted time to climb up from the terrace where the church stands to the higher ground to repeat that photographic exploit of 1971.

My schedule for onward travel into Georgia meant that on the following morning I needed to leave Van and head north-east in the direction of Kars and Ardahan. I wasn't sure where I would be laying my head that night but Kars seemed the most likely jumping-off point for my planned bus journey over the border. As the minibus left the waters of Lake Van in the distance behind us, I glanced nostalgically as we passed the sign for Muradiye, the town where I and my companion had stayed a night in August 1971 and which had been struck by a powerful earthquake in the autumn of that year. I did not have the time or chance to savour the delights of Doğubeyazıt, given that it was a case of having to change minibuses fairly rapidly on the grim outskirts for onward travel to Iğdır and then (after a further change) to Kars. Going towards Iğdır I was able to enjoy some not-very-distinct views in the direction of Mount Ararat; later, as the next minibus continued the journey I noticed that we were very close to the border with Armenia. A fellow passenger pointed out to me the salt mines of Tuzluca as we passed by, and then as we followed the Digor route towards Kars the bleak-looking uplands of Armenia were not at all far away, rising up beyond the river gorge off to our right. This was definitely sensitive border country, with a stark and almost sinister feel to it. Yet it had its own special beauty, carpeted with flowers I could not identify and

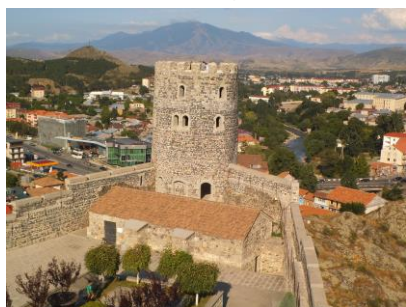
with much scattered human and animal activity to be seen up on the *yaylas* or summer pastures before we began to descend into Kars. On this journey, as I recall, there were at least a couple of occasions when armed police stopped us, firmly but politely enough, to check identities.

Kars turned out to be a friendly, more interesting and rather less bleak place than I had envisaged (even though it appeared to have rained shortly before I arrived), and it was there that I spent my final night in Turkey in a hotel room that was well-appointed for the remarkably low price. Regrettably I didn't have time to include the expected trip to the ruins of Ani, which will have to wait for another time...When I asked the man at the reception desk about buses going into Georgia, he told me I should use VIP Turizm (which sounded just right) and gestured expansively though vaguely to indicate the direction I should take to find their office. After further enquiries on the streets I eventually found it, was welcomed by an attractive young Kurdish lady and was able to buy my ticket for the Saturday morning bus from Kars to the border and on towards Tbilisi. With that arranged, I had time to take an evening wander around parts of this history-laden border town; and apart from viewing from a distance the dark citadel (built, rebuilt and fought for over the centuries by Turks, Mongols, Russians and Armenians), my main attention was given to the group of faded Neoclassical buildings with their basalt façades that, in addition to the grid layout of central Kars, stand as a reminder of the period from 1878 to 1920 when Kars was under Russian rule. It was in the best-preserved (and now attractively lemon-coloured) of these buildings that the Treaty of Kars was signed in 1921.

On the way to the somewhat remote Posof/Vale land border crossing from Turkey into Georgia (less busy than the Sarp crossing on the Black Sea coast) we were travelling through a part of the historic region known to Georgians as Tao-Klarjeti. This is part of the territory and cultural heritage that Georgians sadly lost control of because of the conflicts between the Ottoman Turks and Russians right up to the new dispensation of Republican and Bolshevik times. The region comprises a lot of north-eastern Anatolia and south-western Georgia. On the positive side, some at least of the cultural heritage in the form of old churches and monasteries has been better protected and preserved of late, and individuals or groups from Georgia can certainly visit them freely these days.

Before the bus reached the border at Posof around noon I was slightly amused as well as surprised when some traffic policemen came on board and – at this extreme north-eastern point of Turkey – apparently berated the driver for not ensuring that his passengers were all wearing seatbelts! Later on, after clearing both border posts and having a short refreshment break, we continued into Georgia and I soon found myself getting off as planned (but this after nodding off and being alerted by an Azerbaijani fellow-passenger) not in Tbilisi but in the first main town, Akhaltsikhe. This is the capital of the very scenic south-central Georgian region of Samtskhe-Javakheti, and on advice from my contact in the capital I had planned to spend the first few days based there. I managed fairly soon to locate what turned out to be a

remarkably friendly and helpful hotel beside the road leading up to the main draw in Akhaltsikhe (which means ‘New Castle’ in much the same sense as, say, New College, Oxford). This is the Rabati Castle, celebrated in the past



for having been a symbol of tolerance and of ethnic and religious diversity in this frontier region of Tao-Klarjeti. Even now there is apparently a sizeable Armenian population in the town and region. Within the high fortress area one can visit churches, a synagogue and also the 18th-century Ahmadiyya Mosque (now with a golden dome) along with its associated *medrese* and the surrounding pools and

colonnaded pavilions. There was, I felt, a pleasing touch of Granada about the whole place.

After a couple of days exploring some of the main sights of this region, from the cave city at Vardzia to the famous mineral springs at Borjomi, I moved on aboard that emblematic mode of transport in Georgia, the *marshrutka* minibus, to Tbilisi itself. There I was hosted and shown around by my academic contact and, while based in the fascinating capital, also managed two further excursions on my own: first up the ‘Georgian Military Highway’ to the magnificent scenery of Kazbegi in the Great Caucasus (the nearest I’ve ever been to Mother Russia), and then on my final weekend to the area around Telavi in Georgia’s wine-growing eastern region of Kakheti. My eventual return to Manchester from Tbilisi in mid-August was by courtesy of Pegasus Airlines via Istanbul.

While in Georgia I made some effort to get to grips with the alphabet and managed to learn a handful of useful everyday words. Some people of all ages spoke some English, and some definitely assumed I was Russian. The alphabet is a challenge, and the language has extremely complex elements to it (more so than Turkish, I believe). I can at least pursue my study of it, as time permits, with the help of a book written by my friend in Tbilisi for the benefit of foreign learners. But the Georgian language certainly has for speakers of English its amusing and sometimes counterintuitive offerings: a language in which ‘father’ is *mama*, ‘mother’ is *deda*, ‘girl’ is *gogo* and ‘boy’ *beecho*. I’ll leave you here to mull over these things...

Apology

The article ‘Transcultural adventures in *makam* ornamentation’ by Michael Ellison, which appeared in *Turkish Area Studies Review* 33 (Spring 2019), contained some illustrative material added at the editorial stage but not submitted to the author for approval. Dr Ellison specifically wishes it to be known that the chart labelled ‘Çârgâh makam’ on p. 36 and the photograph of a (Black Sea) *kemençe* on p. 39 are out of keeping with the content of his article. The editorial team sincerely apologises to Dr Ellison for this regrettable error.



TALAT HALMAN

7 July 1931 – 5 December 2014

THE CREATIVE HUMANIST

My title is inspired by Talat Halman's own definition of himself as a humanist in a book of interviews with Cahide Bingöl¹¹⁹ between November 2001 and June 2002 published in 2003 as a book in Turkish with the title *Akılın Yolu Bindir* which was a reversal of the old adage 'There is only one way to wisdom'. In Turkish, changing one letter of the word *bir* (one) to make it *bin* (a thousand) completely reverses the meaning of the adage. It is also indicative of Talat Halman's approach of embracing all the cultures of the world and his universal outlook.

Halman was one of the most creative and imaginative men of culture of Turkey. He was a poet, writer, editor, academic, translator, newspaper columnist, and a professor of Turkish language and culture. He taught at the most prestigious American universities – Columbia, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania and New York University. After 40 years of teaching in the United States, he taught at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul where Dr. Doğramacı, founder of Bilkent University in Ankara, attended some of his lectures. Although not fully in agreement, he was impressed by Talat Halman's critical outlook and offered him a position at Bilkent in 1998 to found a new department of Turkish language and culture.

In the years Halman spent at Bilkent University, the Department of Turkish Studies which he headed published many original studies in Turkish literature in the *Journal of Turkish Literature*. His sudden death, while he was at work until the last minutes of his life, was a big shock for his family, friends and colleagues but in a way symbolic of his life.

Talat Halman was born in 1931 in Kadıköy (ancient Chalcedone), on the Asian side of Istanbul, in the house depicted in the poem I translated which follows this article. He grew up at a time in Turkey after the policies and ideology of the republic in every field, especially in education, had been well established. His father was an officer in the Turkish Navy who became an admiral in charge of submarine forces. He died in 1948 when Talat was 17 years old. His mother's family were well known prosperous Nemlizades who

¹¹⁹ Akılın Yolu Bindir, Cahide Bingöl, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Birinci Basım, Mayıs 2003, İstanbul. Basımevi Matbaacılık A.Ş.

were originally from the northeast port city of Trabzon. They were a prominent family in trade and some of them moved to Istanbul and established businesses there. Talat developed a fondness for the rich folklore of the Trabzon area and collected folk stories as well as jokes. The title of one book he published was *We are all Laz*, referring to the ethnic group who were inhabitants of that area, with a deep sense of regional and historical identity.

After primary school, Talat attended Robert College, a prestigious American institution established in Istanbul in the middle of the nineteenth century by American missionaries. In the secular Turkish republic it had lost its missionary origins and became an educational and cultural institution. Talat's involvement in literature deepened when he was in the first year at Robert College – he had already been reciting poems when he was in primary school. He translated and published a Faulkner short story when he was sixteen years old. After graduating from Robert College and teaching Turkish literature for some time, he went to New York and enrolled at Columbia University. He taught Turkish language and literature at Princeton University, the University of Pennsylvania and New York University. He was writing and translating prose and poetry works from Turkish literature. He worked at the Atlantic Record Company to make a living and was publishing articles in *Milliyet* and later in *Cumhuriyet* about current affairs and cultural and educational policies.

In the United States he lectured frequently at the United Nations and the Turkish House in New York on Turkish literature, sometimes accompanied by his daughter Defne Halman who is an actor. I was fortunate in being able to attend most of his public lectures. Halman was always sharing his lectures with other prominent experts in their fields. For his lecture on Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi he invited W.S. Merwin, the famous American poet, who had donned a Turkish shearling vest on this occasion. Among his invitees were psychologists, architects, musicians, actors and those who performed the dervish ceremonies with *ney* (Turkish flute) music. He had special programs with well-known actors such as Yıldız Kenter, Gngr Yılmaz and Mşfik Kenter. They read Nazım Hikmet's poems both in Turkish and in English translations.

After forty years of teaching, writing and lecturing in the United States, Halman returned to Turkey and became a professor at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. He continued writing and translating endlessly. He dedicated his collection of poems *The Harvest of Hope*, 2008 to Mevlana, Yunus Emre, Shakespeare and all the other greats in the history of poetry, and to the contemporary masters and all those who love poetry. His translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *Love Poems and Narratives* into Turkish in metre and rhyme reflects his wonderful, almost natural, proclivity and his genius in rendering them into Turkish¹²⁰.

¹²⁰ In 2014 Talat Halman gave the John Martin Lecture on 'Shakespearean Art in the Turkish Heart' to the British Association for Turkish Area Studies (BATAS): *TAS Review* 23 (2014), pp,7-11 [Co-Editors]

Talat Halman served in the Turkish Government as an ambassador of Turkish culture. He organized many events for the one hundredth anniversary of Atatürk's birth in 1982. He was also Minister of Culture for a year. When Queen Elizabeth II went to Turkey he was in charge of the protocol. He provided many cultural events for the Queen and her company: she bestowed an award on him. He was elected a member of the Board of UNESCO in 1992 and served for two years, but had to resign to continue his work in Turkey.

For those who cannot read him in Turkish there is an excellent book in English by his colleague and friend Jayne Warner: *Turkish Nomad: the Intellectual Journey of Talat S. Halman*, published in 2017 by I.B. Tauris. It includes some of his writings and many photographs from all stages of his life.

I want to express my feelings of admiration for Talat Halman who was the most perfect embodiment of humanistic values, literature and culture. All his life he was sharing his knowledge with others in writing and teaching. We had the great privilege of being friends of Talat Halman and Seniha Halman. Both my husband Enuga S. Reddy and Seniha Halman (Talat's wife) worked in the United Nations, as did Defne Halman (his daughter). We shared in the devastating passing away of their wonderful brilliant son Sait in 1977, a sadness in our minds and our hearts that will remain forever. I hope my short essay on Talat Halman will kindle interest in the readers of *TAS Review* and will make them read his poems and other works with enthusiasm and inspiration.

Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy

Talat Halman:

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART AND SOUL CANEVI¹²¹

- In her last letter my mother was saying -
Yesterday I went to the old house in Kadıköy.

The lock of the garden gate had become rusted
It must have been from the rains
You cannot question God's blessings.

A new neighbor leaning out of the window across the way:
Said, "They've been away for many years."

The key became frozen in my hand,
Are the window shutters angry at us?
For the first time in forty-five years.

The green gage plum tree in the garden had dried up...
But the jujube is still there in its old place.
We had sacrificed a sheep under it;

¹²¹ The original poem 'Canevi' appeared in *Ümit Harmanı* (The Harvest of Hope), 2008, İstanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, pp.54-56

When the blood spurted from the struggling animal,
 You cried "There can't be a Bayram for the sacrificed."
 Those who forbade us to look at the sun as a sin
 Would lose the purity of their ablutions before prayers.

- Now I understand you so well
 Anyway when they were chanting your father's solemn prayers
 downstairs
 You joined them, "Allah hūmme salli alâ,"
 Accompanied by the distant voices of the pigeons in the fountain,
 Their burning hearts were cooled by the sprinkles of water.
 You may not believe it.
 You know how disgusting I used to find them.
 But today when I entered the house
 I loved the spiders -
 On the walls with cracks bleeding inwards.
 After so many weddings, so many coffins
 Even if they are ugly there is some stirring
 So many laughs couldn't last forever.
 Like the roses blooming in every season
 Even for this much, I am grateful.

When your father died we consoled you
 Your eyes were wide open on the horizon,
 We told you, "he went on a long trip again."
 Perhaps like burying a sleeping bird –
 You already knew it
 May be you already knew it
 The longest grave belongs to sleepless birds.

There will be no talking in the house, no whistling or singing.
 For forty days time would come to a stop.
 And the special sweet lokma...
 The neighborhood's poor know and expect to have
 The taste of death.

Even the mirrors seemed to me missing a whistle...
 What would you expect from a seventyish woman? --
 I whistled deep from my soul
 With the coupling power of my lips
 Against loneliness, against rotting times,
 But before all else a song of victory for my house
 A last call for making love...

And a prayer to be forgiven.

The climbing vine, the most helpless, deathless love.
 - We should never have left our house. -
 What is the use of furniture inside?
 In a mold infested darkness?

Some are life-giving volunteers
 Some are worried about death

Only the climbing vine is caressing the house summer and winter,
But when it shot up they said it is invasive
"Pull it up, it would destroy the building."

I think when we were away a repairman came
He added many more steps to the staircase.
I went up to the attic again.
The roof was always leaking -
After all it is a wooden building, far gone
We couldn't keep up with repairs.
The tiles were falling apart.
All of a sudden I could see the sky!
We the old-fashioned women
Looked for heaven under our roof.
Now close to death
Our roof is offering us a handful of sky.

One of the builders says, "Let's bring it down, build a five-story..."
To tell the truth no hope for repair
Even if we did you won't live there, neither would your children
Don't think this is a curse
Because it isn't.

I say I wish I had died
Before our house passed away.

Translated by **Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy**



TORTUL

Ürkekligimi usumla örterek
Döndüm. Şehir
Gizemli bir yüz gibi çekiyordu beni
kendine.Boğazın
Sularına dökülürdü evlerdi
Yine umutsuzluk minare acı
Saat beş buçuk saat dört buçuk
Saat banka adları mahyalar
Köprü.Tan. Tan
Kiremitleri geçide doğru
Git git sokakmokak
Küf.Yırtık konser afişleri.
Geçtim. Geçit geçtim.
Leş. Köpek. Boşluk. İstanbul.
Geçtim
La la la

BECOME THE DREGS

Covering up my shyness with my mind
I turned back. The City
Like a mysterious face was drawing me in
To itself. It spilled into the waters
Of the Bosphorus they were homes
Hopelessness the minaret and the pain again
Time is five-thirty time is four-thirty
The hour the names of banks and
Illuminations between minarets
The bridge. The dawn, dawn
Its bricks are towards the passage
You go and go up the streets
Mildew. Torn up adverts for concerts
I passed by. The passage. I passed through
The carcass. A dog. Emptiness. Istanbul.
I passed through
La la la

Diye yazın bağların zamanı diye
No 73
No 74

Karanlık heykeller, kestanerengi
Bir rüya gibi
Geçtim.

Eve, boğulmaya.

Ürkekliđimi usumla örterek
Döndüm.Şehre
Boğulmaya. Küçük toprak saksıya
Ben dađda bulduđum yaban
Çileđini ektim.Çocuktum
Onunla yaşıadım. Boşalt
Boşalttım sandıkları
Kokan. Küf. Kitaplardan
Sagdansola, eski
Küfeskil anılardan
Korkma.Korkmadım.
Sandıklardan anılardan.
Fotođraf. Fotođraflardan.
Boşalt boşalt sandıkları
Yazsonu uzayıp giden
Ses.Sesim. Sesledim
Iri parke sokakları pencereden
A b c sesleri göndereni
Remboyu, resimleyerek

Geçtim, boğulmaya.

Ocak 1967

Egemen Berköz

So sang the time of orchards in the summer
No. 73
No.74

Past the dark statues, chestnut brown
Like a dream I passed by.

Back home, back to being smothered.

Covering up my shyness with my mind
I returned. To the City
To be smothered. Into the little earthen pot
I planted the wild strawberry
I had found on the mountain. I was a child
And I lived with it. Unpack
I emptied the trunks
Smelly. Mildew. Of books I emptied it out
From right to left, get old
Out of mouldy memories
Don't be scared. I wasn't scared.
No fear of trunks, of memories.
The photograph. Of photographs
Empty empty out the trunks
The sound
That was extended at summer's end.
My voice. I gave voice to the streets
Of the large cobble-stones from the window

To the one who sent the sounds of a b c
To Rimbaud, putting them into painting.

I passed by, into being smothered.

January 1967

Transl by **Gülay Yurdal Michaels**

ONCE AGAIN: **Subscription Reminder**

New subscription rates apply and can be found on the loose page. UK Members who pay by standing order are please asked to ensure that their payments are at the appropriate levels. Standing order forms are obtainable from the Treasurer. Payment by bank transfer is also welcomed and relevant details of the BATAS bank account can be supplied by the Treasurer.

PHILADELPHIA

WHISPER

Yorgo
in his teens
destined to forgo
all he had
near Philadelphia¹²²
under a chilling
August sun
in Anatolia.

As his dark brown hair
hit the weir
he thought
only of his mother
Elephteria¹²³
and her forthcoming pain
infinitely worse
than his mortal wounds.

Yorgo whispered
to the running water
don't cry ma
please
don't cry.



In a war situation all parties, victor as well as vanquished, suffer horribly. In other words, suffering is not the monopoly of one group and the misfortune of the opponents is often ignored. As in the World Wars one of the largest group of victims in the Turkish War of Independence were teenage soldiers who suffered horrific injuries and agonising deaths. Every year on 30 August Turks celebrate their victory over the invading Greek Army. This is fine. But I feel that at least a little thought should be given to the suffering of the Greek soldiers, especially the teenage ones, who were mostly conscripted and forced to fight. The poem does this.

Likewise, Greeks should also give some thought to the suffering of Turkish civilians as well as soldiers under occupation in western Anatolia.

Erhun Kula

Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul

¹²² Modern Alaşehir (in the Aegean region)

¹²³ Greek for 'freedom'.

Noteworthy Events

compiled by Ayşe Tuğrul Colebourne

Lectures/Talks

'Turkey and Syria: Deep past connections, deep present differences'

British Association for Turkish Area Studies:

2019 John Martin Annual Lecture

Speaker: Diana Darke

Date and time: Friday, 22 November 2019, 18:30

Venue: The Tuke Common Room, Regent's University, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS



'Spring is coming'

Chair: Professor Esra Özyürek, Chair for Contemporary Turkish Studies, LSE



Speaker: Ece Temelkuran, Writer and Political commentator

Date and time: Thursday, 31st October 2019, 18.30-20.00

Venue: Hong Kong Theatre, LSE

More Information: Today Western democracies are still experiencing the first shock of witnessing the authoritarian leaders taking the political stage. It must already be clear that no democracy is immune to this global cancer of politics. It is now time to imagine a counter political current. "Winter is coming" is passe. The new motto is "Spring is coming." But how? When? And most important question is "Are we still competent enough political subjects to imagine a better world?"

<https://waset.org/turkish-studies-conferences>; <https://www.xpobuzz.com/turkey-and-turkish-studies>; <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--london/turkish/>

'Kizzuwatna-Hiyawa-Cilicia: A region at the interface of Anatolia, the Levant and Cyprus in light of the excavations at Sirkeli Höyük'

British Institute at Ankara (BIAA)

2019 Oliver Gurney Memorial Lecture

Speaker: Professor Mirko Novák (Bern University)

Date and time: Wednesday, 30 October 2019 19:00 to 20:30



Venue: Wolfson Lecture Theatre, Senate House, London - North Block (S108), SOAS

More Information: The ongoing Swiss-Turkish excavations at Sirkeli Höyük, one of the largest Bronze and Iron Age settlements in Cilicia, have shed new light on the cultural history of one of the most fertile regions of modern Turkey

An Evening with Elif Shafak and Elizabeth Filippouli

Organised by Waterstones Bookshop

Date and time: Friday 1 November 2019, 19:00 – 21:30

Venue: Waterstones Bookshop, Piccadilly, London W1J 9HD

More Information: A conversation between award-winning British/Turkish writer Elif Shafak and Elizabeth Filippouli, founder of the Global Thinkers Forum and Athena40.

'A Migration of Tents; Evolution and diffusion of nomadic tent types across Central Asia'

The Anglo-Turkish Society

Speaker: Dr Peter Andrews

Date and time: Thursday, 14 November 2019, 18:00

Venue: Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy St, Fitzrovia, London W1T 5BT



More Information: The arrival of nomadic Turks in Anatolia was dependent in part on the dwelling they developed, which allowed them to cross the whole length of Central Asia from their heartland in the Altay. How this dwelling, the felt tent, developed and was disseminated, is therefore significant.

Exhibitions

Troy: Myth and Reality

Dates: Thursday, 21 November 2019 to Sunday, 8 March 2020

Venue: British Museum, Great Russell St, Bloomsbury, London WC1B 3DG

Inspired by the East: How the Islamic World Influenced Western Art

Dates: Thursday, 10 October 2019 to Sunday, 26 January 2020

Venue: The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG

More Information: Charting the fascinating history of cultural and artistic interactions between East and West, this exhibition explores the impact the Islamic world has had on Western art for centuries. Organised with the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, this exhibition includes a generous number of loans from their extensive collection of Islamic and Orientalist art, alongside other important loans and objects from the British Museum collection.

Echoes of the Past: Turkish, Venetian, and Greek

University of Oxford Phonetics Laboratory

Date: Sunday, 27 October 2019, 11:00 – 18:00

Venue: The Hellenic Centre, 16-18 Paddington Street, Marylebone, London W1U 5AS

More information: A pop-up exhibition showing how five centuries of Venetian presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and Greek-Turkish cohabitation in present-day Turkey and Cyprus have left their mark on language and popular culture

CONCERTS

Organiser: Talent Unlimited

Soloist (Violin): Immanuel Bach playing Mendelssohn Violin Concerto (first half)

Soloist (Piano): Salih Can Gevrek playing Mozart Piano concerto No 23 (second half)

Jack Wong conducting the Hornton Chamber Orchestra

Date and time: Wednesday, 27 November 2019, 19:00

Venue: St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL

More Information: Tickets: £20 Adults, £5 Students

Ticket information: canan@talent-unlimited.org.uk;
Eventbrite: <https://tu-autumn-concert.eventbrite.co.uk>

Organiser: Talent Unlimited

Two further concerts:

Date and time: Wednesday 18 December 2019, 1.00 pm

First half: Callum McLachlan, piano

Second half: Duncan Commin, viola + Tolga Atalay Ün,
piano

Venue: Free lunchtime recital at St James's Church,
Piccadilly, London.

Date: Wednesday 22 January 2020

Musical Odyssey Talent Unlimited Prize Winner concert

More information: <http://www.talent-unlimited.org.uk/future-events.html>



Fazıl Say in recital (piano)



With his extraordinary pianistic talents, Fazıl Say has been touching the emotions of audiences and critics alike for more than twenty-five years.

Date and time: Monday 2nd March 2020, 20:30

Venue: Barbican Hall, Barbican Centre, London EC2Y 8DS

Programme information: Chopin Nocturne in E minor, Op 72 No 1;
Nocturne in C-sharp minor; Op KK VIa No 16 Lento con gran espressione;
Nocturne in C-sharp minor, Op KK IVb No 8; Nocturne in E-flat major, Op 9
No 2

Ticket information: <https://barbican.org.uk>; ☎ 020 7638 8891

MISCELLANEOUS

Ottoman Turkish Course for Beginners

Yunus Emre Institute

Dates: Saturday, 12 October to Saturday, 14 December 2019

Venue: Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre, 10 Maple Street, London W1T
5HA

For Details: <https://www.cornucopia.net/events/ottoman-turkish-course-for-beginners/>

Turkish Business Networking

Organised by Mete Metin

Date and time: Friday, 1 November 2019, 7:00pm – 11:30pm

Venue: John Salt, 131 Upper Street, London N1 1QP

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES)

Dates: 29 June – 1 July 2020

Venue: University of Kent, Canterbury

More Information: www.brismes.ac.uk

A part of the conference is devoted to Turkey and the Turkish area.

Conferences & Organisations

Brian Beeley & John Moreton



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

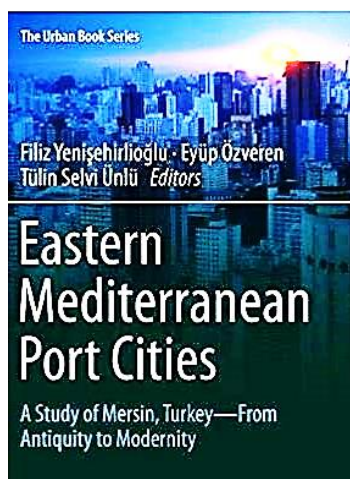
BRISMES 2019

This year's annual conference of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (held 24-26 June) attracted some 400 people to the University of Leeds under the theme 'Joining the Dots: Interdisciplinarity in Middle East Studies'. Throughout the conference this sensible (if also perhaps rather obviously needed) interdisciplinary approach was applied not only to current or historical themes but also to specific countries or areas such as Iran and the GCC states. There were as usual two plenary sessions, book displays, special meetings and seventy-four sessions with four or five presentations in each one. Turkey was the main focus of twenty talks, half of them accounted for by a session on modern Turkish literature and one, chaired by Mina Toksöz, on the country's domestic and international policies which included presentations dealing with recent conflicting attitudes to Syrian refugees and with problems over normalising Turkey's relations with Israel in the early 1960s. Aspects of society and culture in the (mainly late) Ottoman period were also investigated in a further panel.

Turks were responsible for most of the presentations on the country – many of them graduate students. Indeed young academics were much more prominent at the Conference than at earlier meetings. However UK-born scholars in all fields were notably fewer in number, and this continues a trend. Another change over the years since BRISMES was founded in 1974 has been growing concern with speaking out on conflict and on particularly contentious issues in the Middle East, rather than simply studying and writing about them. At this year's AGM in Leeds (held before the actual conference panels got under way) a robust debate led to a vote to limit contact with academic and other Israeli institutions seen to be supporting that country's treatment of Palestinians. One can expect other conflicts in the Middle East to be the focus of active, as well as academic, concern in future.

For the first time a flier advertising BATAS was included this year in the package handed to each of the Conference delegates. In addition those BATAS members who were present in Leeds used the publicity to promote the Association at a personal level – notably to Turkish academics working in the UK. The idea of trying to raise awareness of BATAS and its activities through some possible BATAS-sponsored special session on Turkey at a future conference has been mooted by some of us who are members of both bodies. However, the divisions highlighted at this year's BRISMES AGM make it hard at this point to envisage what shape the Society's activities will take from now on.

Books



Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities

A study of Mersin, Turkey -- from Antiquity to Modernity

by Filiz Yenisehirlioglu,
Eyüp Özveren,
Tulin Selvi Unlu, eds.

Springer, The Urban Book Series,
Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2019, 259pp.

This book contains a selection of papers presented at four colloquia at the Centre for Mediterranean Urban Studies (CMUS) at Mersin University held in 2002, 2005, 2008, and 2011. The objective of the colloquia and the book as set out by Yenisehirlioglu (Department of Archaeology and History of Art, Koc University) and Özveren (Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Middle East Technical University) is to introduce the port city of Mersin into scholarly writing on the Mediterranean world. The coverage of Mersin has been neglected in the past partly because of the absence of an institutional base for its study. This was rectified with the establishment of the CMUS in 2000 in Mersin University.

Mersin as a latecomer in the Eastern Mediterranean

It seems that Mersin was also overlooked because it was a latecomer in the Eastern Mediterranean when compared with ancient Sidon, Tyre, nearby Tarsus, or the bigger Alexandria and Izmir with their long cumulative historical existences. Mersin 'belongs to the family of port cities like the modern Alexandretta, Haifa, and Port-Said that developed as late as the last quarter of the nineteenth...century' (p1). This is despite Mersin being on the route of the westward Neolithic dispersal from the Fertile Crescent as tracked by Mehmet Özdoğan (*Mediterranean as a Supra-regional Interaction Sphere During Late Prehistory*). It is also located in Cilicia that saw the rise and fall of vibrant ancient empires such as the Seleucids – who established several urban centres such as Tarsos, rebuilt as Antioch on the Cydnus in the 3rd Century BC, which is contained in today's city of Tarsus. This and other settlements from the Hellenistic era are covered by Ümit Aydınoğlu (*Settlements in the Hellenistic Period in Cilicia*) who suggests that the archaeological excavations mostly reveal temple formations or defensive, fortress-like structures rather than urban settlements. One exception to this is the ancient city of Soloi-Pompeiopolis located in today's Mezitli district of Mersin. Established around 700BC by Greek settlers from Rhodes, it became

an important port under the Roman commander Pompeius from 68BC. However, it was completely destroyed by a severe earthquake in 525AD.¹²⁴ Hence, the editors argue, Mersin almost grew from nothing in the 19th century.

Cotton, Suez Canal, and the Berlin-Baghdad railway

One factor that delayed Mersin's emergence in the modern era is likely to have been the Little Ice Age bringing climatic conditions that turned many of the coastal plains around the Mediterranean into marshlands from 1550s into the early decades of the 19th century. The flooding, rising swamps and deadly malaria drove what small farming settlements were active in the Cilician plains to higher areas.¹²⁵ The abandonment of the Cilician plain began to reverse with the passing of the Little Ice Age and the beginning of cotton cultivation. The first changes came in the 1830s after the invasion of Syria and surrounding regions by Ibrahim Pasha (son of Mehmet Ali, Khedive of Egypt) who established large scale cultivation of cotton. However, reports that he brought with him fellahin from Egypt to address the labour shortage are disputed by Ehud Toledano (*Where have all the Egyptian Fellahin Gone? Labour in Mersin and Çukurova (second half of the 19th Century)*). He suggests agricultural labour mostly consisted of Syrian migrants and others being resettled from the edges of the Ottoman empire as it lost territory such as Tatars from the Crimea. Cotton cultivation was further boosted by the US civil war in the 1860s that diverted production elsewhere. Halis Akder shows how the European textile industry seeking new sources of supply focused firstly on Alexandria, but also was drawn to Mersin with its Cilician plain and emerging port (*Why did the German Levantine Cotton Company Settle in Cilicia?*).

Around this time, Suez Canal construction added to the activity around Mersin. Historically, Anatolia had been a traditional source of timber for Egypt and the Levant. Timber from the Taurus Mountains was a major source of construction material for the Suez Canal supplied especially by merchants from Beirut who settled in Mersin. Once completed, traffic to India via the Suez Canal had dynamic ripple effects on the whole East Mediterranean with several port cities being developed and trading with each other.

The 1839 Tanzimat and 1856 Islahat reforms in the Ottoman Empire that sought to modernise and strengthen the Ottoman economy and state brought new investments in roads and railways that connected Mersin with central Anatolia and the Levant. A railway line connecting Mersin to Adana was constructed by an English company in 1883-86, taken over by a German firm in 1903, and extended to connect with the Berlin-Baghdad Railway in 1911. Mustafa Servet Akpolat details this as well as the evolution of design features of the First National Architectural Style in the Ottoman and the Second National Architectural Style of the early Republican eras (*Adana-Mersin*

¹²⁴ <https://turkisharchaeonews.net/site/solipompeiopolis>.

¹²⁵ On this see Faruk Tabak, "Economic and Ecological Change in the Eastern Mediterranean c. 1550-1850", in *Cities of the Mediterranean: from the Ottomans to the Present Day*, Biray Kolluoğlu and Meltem Toksöz, eds, I B Taurus, 2014.

Railway Station Buildings: Cross-section of the 19th Century Ottoman Architecture).

The making and unmaking of the multi-ethnic city

During these years, increased transport infrastructure and trade attracted waves of new migrants – Turks, Greeks and Armenians, from Central Anatolia and the Caucasus to the coast and prompted nomadic Turkmen tribes in the Taurus mountains to settle in the plains. Greek Orthodox and Maronite families, fleeing civil unrest in Lebanon in 1840-60, also came bringing vital commercial skills and investment capital. Şerife Yorulmaz reports on the pivotal role of the Maronite community in Mersin in these years (*Maronites in Mersin Through its Process of Becoming an Important Port City in the 19th and 20th Century*).

Of the 20,000 or so population of Mersin in 1920-21, about half was Turkish, about a fifth Greek-Orthodox, 2000-3000 Armenians “who had survived thanks to the presence of the foreign consulates”, with smaller populations of Christian Arabs and Jews (p 112). These statistics are estimated by Evangelia Balta from various Greek archives noting that “although native Orthodox communities had existed in Adana and Tarsus since time immemorial...the community of Mersin was from the outset made up of immigrants since the town itself was newly founded” (p 112, “The Greek-Orthodox Community of Mersin mid-19th Century to 1921”). They came from all around the region, making up what today would be called ‘economic migrants’. There were also political refugees such as those who fled Cyprus following Britain’s occupation of Cyprus in 1878.

This rapid multi-ethnic migration in the last few decades of the 19th century provided another distinct feature of Mersin: the greater assimilation and cohabitation of ethnic communities. This contrasted with longer periods of settlement in Beirut, Alexandria, Izmir, or Salonica where social groups had become segregated spatially and culturally over time. The Greek Orthodox (Rums) in Mersin did not live in specific neighbourhoods but were dispersed throughout the town (p 114); unusually, there was one common cemetery for all religious communities in Mersin.

Mersin’s multi-ethnic population peaked in the early years of the 20th century, and rapidly declined with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in WWI and the end of the subsequent French occupation of the region in 1919-1921. According to a French Foreign Ministry report, some 6,500 Rums left the Cilicia region in 1925 as part of the exchange of populations in the Treaty of Lausanne (p 117) -- but not before some had become very wealthy. The Turkish speaking Bodosakis Athanasiadis, who had settled in Mersin and established a flour mill supplying the German army during WWI, became one of the wealthiest industrialists in Greece (p 114). However, some families stayed: the Maronite Church established in 1881 kept going until 1952, while the various Orthodox churches in the area still stand.

Mersin – a modern port city

Mersin’s development during the Republican era is examined by Tülin Selvi Ünlü and Melike Kayam (*The Port of Mersin from the Nineteenth Century to*

the Twentieth Century). They identify three periods starting with its late-19th century development into the early years of the Republic. The second is the decline in trade and traffic as the global economy entered the 1930s protectionism and depression which was compounded in Mersin by the loss of population, skills and capital following WWI. However, Burak Beyhan shows how the modernisation of Mersin under the new Republic accelerated with investments in infrastructure for the supply of water, electricity, and tramlines and an urban development plan prepared by the Austrian Prof. Hermann Jansen in 1937 (*Entrepreneurial Spirit and Modernisation of a Port City: the Case of Mersin*).

These plans included several proposals to transform Mersin's multi-pier facilities into a modern commercial port. But it was not until the 1950s that a liberalisation of economic policies and a concession given to the Royal Dutch Construction Company finally provided the city with its commercial port in 1962 (p 171). This began the third phase of the development of Mersin which was further supported by other infrastructural investments such as the Seyhan dam and irrigation project that established the Cilician plain (Çukurova) as one of Turkey's major agricultural regions.

One could add a fourth phase to the Mersin city story to bring it up to date and include the impact of the second globalisation era from the 1990s to today. Mersin continued to grow with increased rural migration to the city taking the population to around half a million. In keeping with its historical tradition, it houses large numbers of refugees, this time fleeing the Syrian civil war. The traditional cotton cultivation has been in relative decline while the region has become a major citrus growing and exporting centre. The rise of prosperous, exporting Central Anatolian cities such as Gaziantep from the 1990s onwards also increased the trading activities in the Mersin port. The port was further expanded and upgraded with its privatisation in 2007 to a Turkish-Singaporean consortium of Akfen/PSA International. Today, Mersin continues to renew and reinvent itself as a trading, cultural, and major logistic hub, although the political conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean provide formidable challenges.

Whither the 'Mediterranean Idea'?

This book is a valuable contribution to the study of the Eastern Mediterranean. However, it does not only serve as a historical record – as important as that is. The editors should be congratulated for also raising bigger questions. One is the specificity of the Mediterranean as a unique culture as discussed by Braudel and others that “in terms of the *long duree*, and notwithstanding basic differences in language, religion, and culture, certain unifying elements have been apparent throughout the history of the Mediterranean basin” (p 18).

Alisa Ginio considers this in a review of a mostly forgotten Franco-Israeli historian and archaeologist Nahum Slouschz who lived in 1871-1966 (*The Mediterranean Idea: from the Roman Mare Nostrum to the Book of the Sea by Nahum Slouschz (1948)*). For Slouschz, the 'Mediterranean Idea' was not based on the 'Greco-roman *imago mundi*' as most 'north European images' of the Mediterranean take as their starting premise. His references are to the pre-Hellenic Mediterranean, and the role of the eastern Mediterranean city

kingdoms, such as Ugarit, Sidon, Tyre or Carthage in the west. He was particularly interested in the Cana'anites and Phoenicians. Slouschz argued it was this culture that laid the basis of those who came to be known as Levantines in the Ottoman empire. The unique cosmopolitan character of Mediterranean port cities is further explored by Tülin Selvi Ünlü who has compiled several narratives of leading Mersin families (*The Denizens' turn*). This includes a member of the Sursock family (Greek Orthodox from Lebanon, who were large land-owners in the region during the Ottoman era), Lady Yvonne Cochrane Sursock, who participated in the first colloquium at Mersin University in 2002 (p 245).

But the 'Levantines' have mostly left the places of their ancestors and mostly live in the cosmopolitan cities of Europe and North America where a new strand of nativism seems to be emerging. Meanwhile, today, many parts of the Mediterranean are wracked by conflict. However, it is worth thinking how this culturally specific cosmopolitanism around the Mediterranean Sea emerged and evolved in the various multi-ethnic empires from ancient times to the Ottomans. How it reached its peak at the end of the 19th century globalisation and how it fell prey to the stronger forces of ethnic or religious nationalism.

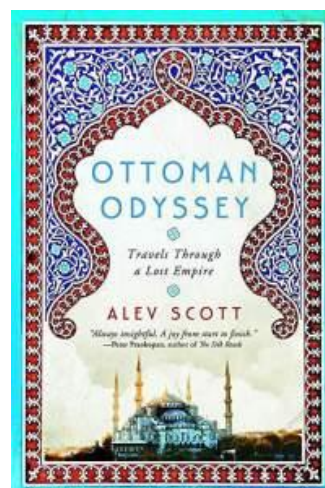
Mina Toksöz

University of Manchester Business School

The Ottoman Odyssey: Travels Through a Lost Empire

by Alev Scott

G.B.: Quercus Publishing Ltd.
October 2018, 292 pages



Alev Scott born to a Northern Cypriot mother and British father was influenced by her grandmother Şifa, a Turk from Northern Cyprus to whom she has dedicated the book: "In memory of my granny Şifa and other victims of nationalism". Alev learned from her grandmother that she and her contemporaries on Cyprus used to live in harmony regardless of religious and national affiliation. In her late years in North London, granny Şifa made friends with Greek Cypriots in the park. In London she felt closer to a Greek Cypriot than to the British. A life of shared history and customs of a certain geography was engraved on Alev's mind from an early age. She says she

wrote this book to search for what was left of the harmonious life of various 'millets' of the Ottoman Empire. The method she used was to travel to all corners of the old empire, East and West and see for herself. She was specially interested in the plight of the minorities of the Ottoman Empire. How they fared after the dismantling of the empire? What could still be seen of their shared legacy of hundreds of years of Ottoman rule.

She starts the book with Sultan Mehmet II's conquest of Istanbul and goes through the expansion years then the dismantling of the empire and brings the story to our day. She seems to have done her initial research in libraries but relies a lot on her interviews of various people in places she visits. Often these are not lengthy interviews of prominent people – although she refers to some of those. She mostly chats with the man in the street or in coffee houses in the areas she visits.

She is mostly interested in the non-muslim minorities in the cities she visits. She goes to churches and synagogues even when not used or derelict. In Turkish cities like Antakya and Mardin, even Istanbul, she finds pockets of minorities. The rest of the city is ignored so the reader can get an eerie feeling of surreal cities. Some parts of the book are more emotional than others such as the plight of the Arabs under Israeli rule even in the city of Haifa which presents a facade of peaceful coexistence among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Again her emotions of deep-felt grief run high for the victims of the population exchange between Turks and Greeks in 1923.

She traces the persistence of Turkish words in old Ottoman lands. For example she notices the use of the Turkish Word 'fincan' in Israel when she visits Professor Edy Kaufman and his fifth generation Jerusalemite wife in Haifa. The couple left Lisa's hometown of Jerusalem in 2013 because they had had enough of the tensions of the city and moved to the very top of Carmel Hill looking out over Haifa with a view of the Mediterranean Sea stretching towards Cyprus. Ed served Alev coffee from a 'fincan'. Ed called it a local word, certainly a Jew in New York would not use it. They had a discussion about Ottoman Turkish that keeps creeping up in the Hebrew spoken in Jerusalem. Alev had assumed the Hebrew spoken in Jerusalem to be the purest form of Hebrew so she is surprised to find it Turkish-infected (197). Then she thought of the similar phenomenon of Turkish words in the Greek language in places like Lesbos, for example. In my travels I was struck by the popularity of the word 'karpuz/ arpuz' all the way to Vienna from Istanbul. I was aware of 'fincan', 'cezve' and many other household words.

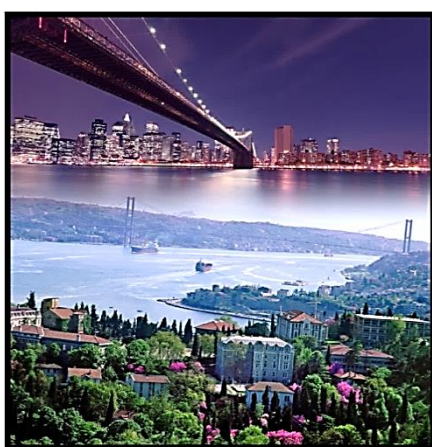
In the 292 page book some parts are repetitive such as the third bridge in Istanbul being named after the Alevi-massacring sultan. Also some references to fierce nationalism and racism are repeated. She started the book with her idea about minorities and looking she saw only what fitted her thesis. She is not specially scientific or open-minded. She makes a few mistakes too. She lumps Hürriyet and Sözcü newspapers together. Sözcü is the most leftist and anti-establishment of all Turkish papers. Hürriyet has always been populist and not very critical of the state of affairs. She is wrong about retired government officials not keeping their green passports. I and all the retirees keep our green passports.

She comes to the conclusion that there is no equivalent to the Ottoman ‘millet’ system anywhere today but she is convinced that the Ottoman social and cultural legacy is most obvious in the Levant, not in Turkey, Greece or the Balkans. She thinks this may be because the Levant has the greatest significance for the three Abrahamic religions. The tone of the book is sad and pessimistic throughout the book with a streak of nostalgia for “the benign tyranny” of the Ottomans.

Belma Ötüş Baskett

The Turkish-American Conundrum

Immigrants and Expatriates between Politics and Culture



Edited by Gönül Pultar, Louis Mazzari and Belma Ötüş Baskett

The Turkish-American Conundrum

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**Immigrants and Expatriates between
Politics and Cultures**

Edited by Gönül Pultar
Louis Mazzari
and Belma Ötüş Baskett

Newcastle upon Tyne:
Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019
pp. ix+212
ISBN (10): 1-5275-2428-0
ISBN (13): 978-15275-2428-6

This group of essays presents a panoply of converging and diverging realities and – yes –struggles experienced by the bi-cultural/transnational immigrants crossing the Atlantic to the United States, the then land of opportunity, with dreams of a better life and the possibility of wealth. For many those dreams were indeed fulfilled; for others the toil for survival continues. Yet, while over one hundred years from the Ottoman Empire to the 1923 founding of the new Republic of Turkey have past the profile of the Ottoman/Turk has metamorphosed from the Moslem Ottoman, the multi-ethnic/religion Ottoman minority (Greek, Armenian, Jew) to predominantly Moslem/secularist Turk and Turkic peoples, the fundamental experiences of the immigrant to the United States remain. Only the pro files have changed, dependent on education, English language proficiency, if any in some cases, and skills imported to the new land, America. And from this immigrant population are now the offspring born in the USA. Bring into the fold American Studies taught in Turkey and the expatriate American drawn into the alluring web of what is Turkey: voilà! The true bi-cultural, transnational experience. Conundrum?

The main points of the conundrum as seen through the eyes of a variety of contributors of varied backgrounds are very well presented in the ‘Introduction: From

Hi Jolly to the Blonde Belly-Dancer, a Multi-facet Conundrum'. Without going into great detail, the editors introduce and identify the topic of each essay thus leaving ample space for the reader to come to his/her own conclusions. Throughout the book, the footnotes amplify in sometimes great and welcome detail the subject-matter, and the bibliographies offer excellent lists of sources.

Justin McCarthy ('The Turk in America') tackles a sensitive subject both for Turks and non-Turks: that of the image known to the world and the West specifically, according to the author, of the 'Terrible Turk'. While Europeans over centuries dealt with Ottoman Constantinople through commerce, education, as well as government, such interchange was limited. The 'Terrible Turk' was known during the time of the Ottoman Empire as a ferocious fighter – the Janissaries are a perfect example. But that was then. I do not recall any reference by American colleagues to the Turks as being terrible in this day and age. While I respect McCarthy's observations, I do not necessarily agree with them all. His arguments would have been better served had he written in a more academic, more organized style rather than the emotional tone he assumes for this work.

The first wave of immigrants to the United States has assimilated. These early settlers are now the ancestors of younger second, third, and fourth generations born in the country. Inter-marriage, distance from the homeland, and acceptance of a new way of life account for their descendants having 'become Americans' and viewing Turkey as the land from which their grandparents migrated so long ago. Belma Ötüş Baskett's review of early Turkish writings, travelogues, memoirs ('Literature about the Turkish Immigration to the United States of America') provides interesting insight into early impressions of America held by Turks during the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as into the arrival in the US of Ottoman citizens. Disembarking with Ottoman passports were Moslem Turks as well as members of various Ottoman ethnic/religious groups – Armenians, Greeks, Jews – the profile of the ethnic and religious diversity of people within the then Empire. As Ottoman citizens, all immigrants, whatever their ethnicity or religion, fell under the umbrella of 'Turks' as far as the immigration personnel on Ellis Island were concerned. Many stayed in the land of promise and opportunity, while others heeded Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's invitation to return to participate in the building of the new Republic.

In addition to descriptions of the early immigrants, Baskett's essay depicts early experiences of the itinerate traveler drawn to this country in search of paradigms to take back to Turkey. American success stories, American progressiveness had piqued the curiosity of scholars and leaders of the new Republic of Turkey. Though formal research of Turks in America did not exist at the time, Dr Mehmet Fuat Umay's memoir of his travels to America in the early 1920s provides the first written backdrop of those years (*Amerika'da Türkler ve Gördüklerim*). Dr Umay's goal as he sailed from Turkey was to solicit donations to aid the plight of the many surviving Turkish war orphans in the aftermath of the 'war to end all wars' – would that were true. He came to gather information and seek paradigms related to childcare and development. As he traveled into the unknown, welcome mats were spread out for him. Of particular interest is the number of highly successful Jewish émigrés who entertained him during his travels, who maintained a certain tie with the fatherland, and who, it may be supposed, continued to identify with their country of birth. He was also welcomed by major heads of industry seeking to open commerce and trade with Mustafa Kemal's new Republic. Umay's endeavor resulted in his return to Turkey with a treasure chest of progressive ideas for the welfare of children, as well as well-filled coffers to aid children, post-war survivors.

Expanding on Baskett's review of the early immigrant experience, Zeynep Kiliç's essay 'Politics of Migrant Belonging: An Analysis of Turkish Migrant Associations in the New York Metropolitan Area' identifies three waves of immigration, which are further discussed in this volume by Zafar Parlak ('Adaptation and Integration Process of First Generation Turkish-Americans and Turks Living in the United States') and Tahire Erman ('The Mosque Community of Turkish Tailors in Massachusetts'). While the ethnic Turk struggled to become part of the American melting pot, as it was then called, the ethnic minorities, as Baskett points out, found their path smoother. Being Christians or Jews, their roads to survival were less arduous and lonely as they became part of established or establishing communities of their co-religionists.

The second wave, post WWII, brought in a professional class, educated, English-speaking, many of whom became, and still are, well known for their success in academia, business, medicine, the media to name a few. This is the group of Turks that assimilated most easily into American life, who became active participants in the civil and political life of their new country, and who founded Turkish societies that brought a cohesiveness to the group, as well as a voice in local and national government which is beginning to be heard.

Enter the third wave, those arriving after winning the 'green card lotto', among whom are a good number from Anatolia. The post 9/11 years and the anti-Islamic rhetoric emanating from Washington have not been kind to those who practice Islam in the USA. As Erman discusses, this last wave of immigrants is largely conservative. Unlike the first and second waves, building community mosques has become a priority to establish a continuum on which to raise their families within the precepts of Islam, with the hope that their offspring will follow the paths of parents. Whether or not they will succeed remains for the future, to how strongly their children identify as Moslems and as Americans. It may be safe to suggest, though, that the current anti-Moslem rhetoric may challenge them to remain within the protection of their tightly knit communities.

Returning to the post WWII immigrants, Baskett in her second essay 'Contemporary Turkish-American Writers and Their Work' once again provides an overview of these 'second-wavers', specifically in the field of writing. Their names, among many? Engin Inel Holmstrom, Alev Lytle Croutier, both graduates of the then American College for Girls (now one with Robert College), American educated Güneli Gün, and US second generation Elif Batuman, daughter of Turkish-born and educated medical doctors, who came to further specialize and remained. Of the four, Croutier and Batuman are probably best known to the American reader.

Though the author of several books, Croutier's *Harem: The World Behind the Veil* is probably her best-known work for the first-hand vignettes of her Ottoman family, tales from the harem, along with beautiful displays of paintings and photographs depicting what the West often refers to as the mysteries of the Middle East. Sadly, there exists one blatant historical error: she refers to the Byzantine Empress Helen as the Emperor Constantine the Great's wife, whereas she was his mother. The result is the reader's questioning the accuracy of other facts in such a lovely book.

A regular contributor to *The New Yorker* magazine, Batuman travels extensively gathering a variety of materials for her differing reportages. Baskett piques readers' interest into Batuman's highly successful literary endeavors. Her reportage from Turkey and written up in a 2016 issue of the magazine, 'The Head Scarf, Modern Turkey, and Me' is a reflection of the bicultural experience, of the Turk born in the diaspora returning to her Turkish roots. While in Istanbul and with her 'simplistic Turkish', she does not feel particularly alien in the cosmopolitan city. No, not until she

travels to Urfa in Southeastern Turkey near the Syrian border does she come to terms with a different reality, a different Turkey. In this conservative city, she notices that she stands out as a woman traveling alone. Donning a headscarf to visit a holy site one day, she inadvertently kept it on as she continued to roam about, and suddenly achieved a certain visibility, respect, and acceptance among the local populace. Hence, the question put to herself: to continue to wear the headscarf throughout her stay and fit in or maintain her individual identity and not meld into the local scene. After her imposed self-scrutiny, she opted for the latter, remaining the daughter of Kemalists by rejecting the headscarf.

Unlike Batuman, I did not arrive in Turkey as the descendant of Turks, but rather as an expatriate student from the United States to Turkey and am a graduate in Comparative Literature from what was then Robert College, now Bosphorus University. A few years back, a friend and former classmate suggested that we spend an afternoon of nostalgia on the grounds of our *alma mater*, an invitation I accepted with pleasure: those years spent on the hill overlooking Rumeli Hisar were halcyon. As we walked across the green, what was in our day a sometimes muddy, sometimes dusty soccer field, I saw faces from the past and sought to recognize one, to greet and reminisce. But suddenly I was confronted with reality: the faces I saw, I did not know, and they did not know me. They were probably the sons and daughters of my fellow students. Louis Mazzari's essay 'America Makes Me Stronger: A View from the Bosphorus of American Studies in Turkey' begs the question: did we have American Studies in those days of yore? My immediate answer to myself was no. The only course that came close was American Literature. But the more I thought about it, I came to the realization that we were, back then, living American Studies. The majority of our professors were Americans or Turkish graduates of American universities; our textbooks – literature, business, engineering, science – were American textbooks; the language of instruction was English; graduates were flying off to 'the States' for graduate work; many stayed, many returned. Robert College was itself the venue for American Studies without question. The evolution of time has brought change: Bosphorus University is run by Turks, not Americans. Yes, there are departments called American Studies, courses called American Studies, students pursuing their interests in the United States through these studies. But we lived the experience 'back then'. We lived the experience of America with our professors, our courses, and the lectures of famous expatriates, the likes of William Saroyan and James Baldwin.

Many RC graduates of my time were part of that second wave and, as mentioned earlier, some returned home, while others became part of the brain drain, preferring to remain in America, a land with which they were already familiar. But, as Mazzari points out, Bosphorus University students of today do not necessarily see America as the land of milk and honey, rather as a land they want to understand, to learn about. They do not see it necessarily as an escape. Are they the Dr Mehmet Fuat Umays of the future?

And so, Ralph J Poole's essay 'One sees it better from a distance': James Baldwin's 'Staging America in Turkey' brings us to another facet of the conundrum: the escape to Turkey of the American expatriate, most notably the writer James Baldwin. He arrived at the home of his friend Turkish actor Engin Cezzar with the now-famous words on his lips: "Baby I'm broke, I'm sick. I need your help." Baldwin made Turkey his home for the good part of ten years. It was from the shores of the Bosphorus that he was able to write about his homeland, to see it with an objectivity that distance often provides. He adapted to his new environs, mingling among Turks and expatriates alike, in particular the Robert College community, and embracing a

certain anonymity enjoyed by living the life of a 'stranger in a strange land'. Unlike the Turkish immigrant of no matter which wave, Baldwin wasn't seeking another homeland, another future. But he did need to distance himself from his country in order to think clearly, to be able to see HIS forest through HIS trees. In Turkey he wrote about America, his America. By distancing himself from 'home' in Istanbul, a city that he learned to love, among people who accepted him without questions, Baldwin found his voice and eventually he did return 'home'. Thinking back to the day he came to speak to our psychology class, I wish I, a young freshman, had had the insight, the courage to ask him how he discovered his voice in Turkey.

The final chapter of the book, 'Turkish-American Studies: Trajectory, Trends and Future Direction' by Gönül Pultar presents an excellent review and expands the list of literature in the field. As she affirms, the time has come to open the floodgates to other disciplines, e.g., political science, international finance and studies, scientific research, global technology and communications, to name just a few. In addition to studying the role of the immigrant to America, his/her assimilation into the new life, it behooves scholars, if they have not done so already, to study the transnational perspective, the relationship of Turks in Turkey with those in the United States. There should be more expansive research that goes beyond the Mississippi to the Western frontier. The American West Coast is home to immigrants, many Turks, yet the studies in this book remain on the East Coast. It was Horace Greeley who penned the phrase, "Go West, young man." At any rate, it would seem appropriate to thus end this review'.

This volume identifies the variety of Turkish immigrants to America. Whether or not one writes Turkish-American or Turkish American, whether or not one maintains the experience to be bi-cultural, bicultural, or transnational points to the issue of an evolving identity among Turkish immigrants to the United States. However, in this age of the 'global village' inspired by the internet, international trade, commerce, transcontinental educational exchange, transnational does appear to me to be more appropriate, though the term bicultural (bi-cultural) should be neither ignored nor obliterated. But no matter what label one chooses, the question remains: who is the Turkish-American? What are the complexities that constitute his/her identity? Is there a stereotype? Given the variety of Turks having immigrated to the United States for over more than a century, it is safe to suggest that there is no stereotype. Each wave brought Turks from varied backgrounds and ethnic groups, from the Ottomans to the educated professionals of the post WWII era, to immigrants of Turkic origins and, finally, to the Anatolians of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Thus, my answer to my question is no, there is no stereotype. While Justin McCarthy's argument of the 'Terrible Turk' stereotype portrayed in what I deem to be the past cannot and should not be ignored, I suggest that it is outdated and belongs to the archives, the annals of a distant history.

Go West, young man/woman, to a newer world; study the work, the successes of Turkish immigrants in the last American frontier.

Alexandra A. Turkington

Book Launch and Interview:

Erdoğan Rising: The Battle for the Soul of Turkey¹²⁶

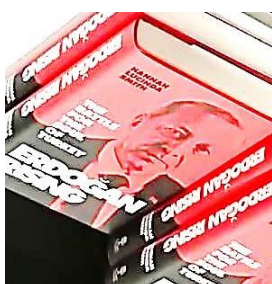


by Hannah Lucinda Smith

The book launch of *Erdoğan Rising: The Battle for the Soul of Turkey* by acclaimed journalist and *Times* correspondent Hannah Lucinda Smith, was held on Tuesday 3 September in the Khalili Lecture Theatre of SOAS University of London. Ms Smith was interviewed by Gamon McLellan, Teaching Fellow in Turkish at SOAS.

Hannah Lucinda Smith has been covering conflict and humanitarian issues since early 2013 in the Middle East, reporting from Syria and investigating the impact of the war there on the wider region. She has previously worked on investigations in Kosovo, Brazil and the UK and now lives in Istanbul.

Erdoğan Rising is the story of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's ascent from his humble beginnings to becoming Mayor of İstanbul in 1994 with 26% of the vote, Prime Minister in 2003 and, in 2014, the President of a country that borders and buffers Europe, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union, marshals the second largest army in NATO, hosts more refugees than any other nation, and now is deeply and irreversibly divided.



In conversation, Ms Smith answered questions about the book and the political climate in Turkey, about the country's current turbulent state and the future of Turkish democracy.

Gül Greenslade

RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

ARTS AND ARCHITECTURE

Hüttler, Michael and Weidinger, Hans Ernst (Eds.). *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre Vol. V: Gluck and the Turkish Subject in Ballet and Dance*. (Hollitzer Wissenschaftsv, May 2019). ISBN-10: 3990120743.

¹²⁶ 5 September 2019, London: William Collins, ISBN 978-0-00-830886-1

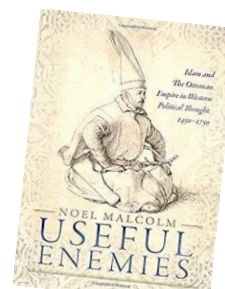
Yılmaz, Nadir Kemal. *Masks of Exploit: Göbekli Tepe & Pillars of the Pharaoh System*. (Amazon Digital Services, LLC, August 2019). SIN: B07X5MPQWC.

HISTORY

Köksal, Yonca. *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne* (SOAS/Routledge Studies on the Middle East). (Routledge, February 2019). ISBN-10: 1138335738.

Noel, Malcolm. *Useful Enemies: Islam and The Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought, 1450-1750*. (Oxford University Press, May 2019). ISBN-10: 0198830130.

O'Quinn, Daniel. *Engaging the Ottoman Empire: Vexed Mediations, 1690-1815*. (University of Pennsylvania Press, January 2019). ISBN-10: 0812250605.



LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Shafak, Elif. *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World*. (Penguin, June 2010). ISBN-10: 0241979463

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

Arat, Yeşim and Pamuk, Şevket. *Turkey Between Democracy and Authoritarianism* (Cambridge University Press, August 2019). ISBN: 9781139022385.

Askerov, Ali, et.al. *Contemporary Russo-Turkish Relations: From Crisis to Cooperation*. (Lexington, June 2018). ISBN-10: 1498553230.

Abou-El-Fadl, Reem. *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War*. (Cambridge University Press, December 2018). ISBN-10: 1108475043.

O'Brian, Tia and Denis, Nur (Eds.) *Sabiha Sertel: The Struggle for Modern Turkey Justice, Activism and a Revolutionary Female Journalist* (Translated by David Selim Sayers and Evrim Emir-Sayers). (I.B. Tauris, June 2019). ISBN: 9781788313575.

Toygan, Sinan Baykan. *The Justice and Development Party in Turkey: Populism, Personalism, Organization*. (Cambridge University Press, December 2018). ISBN-10: 110848087X.

Çağaptay, Soner. *Erdogan's Empire: Turkey and the Politics of the Middle East*. (I.B. Tauris, September 2019). ISBN-10: 1788317394

Smith, Hannah Lucinda. *Erdogan Rising: The Battle for the Soul of Turkey (English and Turkish Edition)*. (William Collins, September 2019). ISBN-10: 0008308845 (refer to page XX)

SOCIOLOGY AND RELIGION

Alimen, Nazli. *Faith and Fashion in Turkey: Consumption, Politics and Islamic Identities*. (I.B. Tauris, February 2018). ISBN: 9781788311663.

Bruce, Benjamin. *Governing Islam Abroad: Turkish and Moroccan Muslims in Western Europe* (The Sciences Po Series in International Relations and Political Economy). (Palgrave Macmillan, September 2018). ISBN-10: 3319786636.

Kaya, Ayhan. *Turkish Origin Migrants and Their Descendants: Hyphenated Identities in Transnational Space* (Identities and Modernities in Europe). (Palgrave Pivot, August 2018). ISBN-10: 3319949942.

Muedini, Fait. *LGBTI Rights in Turkey: Sexuality and State in the Middle East*. (Cambridge University Press, December 2018). ISBN: 9781108265133.

Sarı, Özdemir et.al. (eds.) *Urban and Regional Planning in Turkey* (The Urban Book Series). (Springer, January 2019). ISBN-10: 3030057720

MISCELLANEOUS

Dillar, Duke. *Captivating Cappadocia: The Comprehensive Guidebook to the Heart of Turkey*. (Birds of a Feather Press, February 2019). ISBN-10: 1944370110.

OECD. *OECD Environmental Performance Reviews: Turkey 2019*. (Org. for Economic Cooperation & Development, February 2019). ISBN-10: 9264309748.

Wilson, Owen. *Jamal Khashoggi and The Crown Prince*. (Gibson Square Books, March 2019). ISBN-10: 178334069X.

Yalav, Feride. *The 500 Hidden Secrets of Istanbul*. (Luster, May 2019). ISBN-10: 9460582427.

Compiled by Arın Bayraktaroğlu

In Memoriam



Norman Stone

1941 - 2019

In the middle of the 1990s, while the Bosnian war was at its height, a British academic arrived at Ankara airport on his way to attend a conference on ways

to halt the Bosnian genocide. He was a heavy smoker, but because of his flight had not had a cigarette for several hours. He assumed that he would be unable to smoke in Ankara airport too, and saw some way off a large sign saying 'No smoking'. But under it, a group of policemen was standing, and they were smoking. The visitor went over and joined them, smiled and began chatting with them despite his lack of Turkish, and lit up. "This is the country for me," he concluded.

Over the next quarter of a century Norman Stone used to recount this story to explain how his affection for Turkey had first been kindled. His seminar destination on that visit was Bilkent University. Bilkent, Turkey's first private 'foundation' university, was then only about a dozen years old, but it had already established itself as one of the top universities in the country, recruiting top names from the older state universities.

Norman expressed delight at what he was seeing to one of the staff organising the conference. She asked him if he would like to come and work there. It was a bold request to put to a very well-known Oxford professor, but Norman thought that he might indeed like it. Professor Ali Dođramacı, the university's rector, was promptly alerted and spotted the possibilities. A conversation with Norman followed in which he was offered and accepted a professorship in the International Relations Department.

So began an association with Bilkent lasting nearly a quarter of a century, which was as happy and satisfactory for both sides as the latter parts of Norman's British university career had been unhappy. Taking a job in Turkey was a career move that astonished and even slightly shocked observers back in Britain. Norman, however, did not stop his flow of journalism and in it, he shared his experiences of this new world and his admiration for the people he met – including his new students. To readers in Ankara, the people he was writing about were often easily recognizable. He was creating a new channel of understanding for Turkey in the UK, at just the time when globalisation was opening up Turkish society to the world.

Though he was already past his mid-fifties when he arrived in Turkey, the country had till then figured only very peripherally in Norman's books. He swiftly became proficient in the language and able to read academic history books easily. Affable and genial in Turkish company regardless of politics, he also built up a wide circle of academic and diplomatic friends that included most of Turkey's leading historians, disarming initial reservations which often surround an eminent newcomer.

Norman swiftly concluded that the Turkish side of the argument on the great controversies arising from the end of the Ottoman Empire and the Cyprus dispute deserved more even-handed consideration than it usually gets in Britain and America. He studied the literature on the fate of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire (which was mostly in English) and detected serious holes in the scholarship and arguments, and joined in the polemics.

In Ankara and Istanbul, he was courted by ambassadors and diplomats from all the major Western countries, amusing them with anecdotes and insights,

usually inserting small but felicitous compliments about their particular country and its history into a flow of disarmingly irreverent and jokey conversation. Though a noted Eurosceptic, he was usually on good terms with the EU ambassador of the day and it was with the EU Ambassador that he spent a cheerful diplomatic dinner in Ankara in June this year that was to be among his last social occasions in the city.

At Oxford and Cambridge, Norman had always got on well with his pupils. One of his erstwhile Oxford 'staircase' neighbours came back into his life as British Ambassador to Turkey. At Bilkent, he remained mentor, friend, instructor, and entertainer to several new generations of scholars. "He was a great and generous teacher," said one of his graduate pupils after his death. "He was a giant," said another, now a senior World Bank economist in Washington. He helped train a generation of young Ottomanists, some of them Americans as well as Turks. Norman's contacts in Cambridge were still strong and he was able to ensure that some of his ablest Turkish historian pupils did their doctorates there. He spent some time in Istanbul at Koç University, living in a palatial flat in Galata and becoming a stalwart of the British colony. But Bilkent and the life there remained his first love and he returned to it after two years, helping to found its Institute of Russian Studies.

Norman's final decade at Bilkent was happy as it had been in the late 1990s and early 2000s, but he was increasingly dismayed about the direction Turkey was taking. He said so quite openly in several articles in the British press criticizing President Erdoğan. His previously warm relations with officialdom and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooled somewhat, though not to the point of conflict.

His main contribution to Turkish history is a short and entertaining introduction for the general reader, first published in 2012, but still selling well. On Amazon it far outstrips sales of standard and more highly regarded academic works on Turkey. A friend [Andrew Mango] observed drily that the book "never lets the facts stand in the way of a good joke", but that has not deterred general readers.

For his last few years Norman, now in his late seventies, moved to a new home in the Hungarian capital. He was granted citizenship overnight in a country where his former pupil and friend, Viktor Orbán, was prime minister. His last work was a short history of Hungary, published in January this year. A companion to his short history of Turkey, it was a far cry from the pyrotechnic brilliance of his first book, on the Eastern Front in World War One, which had made his reputation, but it has gone down well with general readers.

From Budapest Norman retained his strong links with Bilkent and returned to Ankara several times a year, to work in the university. He went there also for medical treatment, having concluded (after several spells in hospital) that Turkish medical and dental treatment were both better than in the other countries he knew well.

But air travel was becoming increasingly difficult as his health declined. Aware that his end was approaching, Norman asked for his ashes to be laid to rest in Turkey. A majestic funeral in Budapest, attended by the Hungarian prime

minister and the Turkish Ambassador, as well as a group of Bilkent colleagues, friends, and pupils was followed a few days later by the interment of his ashes on the banks of the Bosphorus in the Protestant Cemetery in Feriköy.

In England Norman Stone had been a controversial, and in some quarters, a very unpopular figure. In Ankara he was a much loved and cherished mentor who brought a warm friendship that his Turkish friends had not encountered before from a leading Western public intellectual.

David Barchard

IN APPRECIATION OF TWO GOOD FRIENDS

by **Özdem Sanberk**
Ambassador of Turkey to the UK
1995-2000



I was preparing to write this appreciation of my good friend Professor Norman Stone this week, when the sad news reached me of the death of Professor Clement Dodd. The two men had very different personalities but both were invaluable friends of Turkey whom I shall always miss, but feel grateful that they were such staunch supporters. They were the most valuable kind of supporters too – those who would speak up in public, devote time and energy to their friendship with Turkey, but also offer realistic and candid opinions when needed. I benefited a great deal from the wisdom of both, even though their areas of expertise were very different. A third very good friend in academic life whom we lost some years back was John Martin, whose memory I also honour.

Both were regular attenders at seminars and receptions which we held at our residence during my time as ambassador. Norman, with his national reputation, drew in the crowds and people watched with a kind of excitement. His points were always good ones and original, and often humorous. But there could be surprises and even tensions. When Norman was due to speak, you could not be altogether sure when and how he would appear. Sometimes there would be a long wait and I and my colleagues would start becoming anxious that he might not turn up in time to give his talk. Then, at almost the very last moment, there he would be, grinning and cheerful, ready to talk without notes, and the audience would sit back and be entertained, but also instructed.

Norman was the perfect speaker to close a meeting. He would give a speech that was amusing but also very perceptive and containing some important messages which he had detected when others did not. He saw things in a completely fresh way and usually an encouraging one.

Clement Dodd's speciality was Northern Cyprus and the unfair treatment it has received internationally. His knowledge was unrivalled and I think his wisdom was too. He knew that he would find it very hard to persuade the Foreign Office and Whitehall to accept the case for the Turkish Cypriots, but that did not deter him. He was a tireless presenter of the Turkish Cypriot case and he brought to it a fluency and grasp of detail which I don't think anyone else has been able to do. It was a very important contribution to a debate which is often one-sided. We will miss him and his contribution very much, and perhaps particularly at this time when storm clouds are once more growing in the Eastern Mediterranean.

He and his charming wife Nesta were also good friends and hosts as well as guests, and it was one of my regrets leaving London at the end of my term as ambassador that I no longer saw them both in recent years. I would like to extend my condolences to their family.

Norman of course was in Turkey teaching at Bilkent University after I left England and he had a home in Istanbul opposite the Galata tower, not very far from where I live, so I did see him periodically and our friendship continued. He had come to Turkey when he was no longer young but, after a while, I was impressed to find that our conversations went from English into fluent Turkish. It was a considerable accomplishment. His Turkish showed that he appreciated the mentality and culture of Turks, which is something few new learners of a language can do.

As professors go, Norman was something very much out of the ordinary, and yet he was a great scholar, very widely read in the entire history of Europe, and with wit that made everyone chuckle. He was both a great teacher and a great entertainer. I know that in England there were those (actually I think not the majority, or he would not have been so famous) who were irritated by him or even hostile. But once he had settled in Turkey, I don't think that there was anyone he knew who did not view him with great affection. Certainly from all I heard, his students and colleagues all did, and I know that in the Foreign Ministry, he was regarded with both great fondness and great respect by the diplomats of several generations. We knew we were lucky to have such a friend.

So in a very short space of time, our country has lost two good and valuable friends. We will mourn them but also always remember them warmly – and hope that the United Kingdom will send us new friends in this great tradition, helping build bridges of understanding and sympathy between our two nations.

Another Reminder!!

Invitation

We need a regular contributor for our **Noteworthy Events** feature. If you might consider compiling such a list for our two annual issues please contact one of our Co-Editors for more details.

We need a new Co-Editor for the TAS Review: Please volunteer!!!

Ideally the Co-Editor should be fairly familiar with Turkey and Turkish affairs, fully fluent in English
Don't hesitate to contact celia.kerslake@orinst.ox.ac.uk if you are interested or would like more information.

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 cigdembalim@yahoo.co.uk and/or sigimartin3@gmail.com. Submissions for the Spring issue would be particularly welcomed by 1 March 2020.

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