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Spring/Summer Symposium 2025

at the London School of Economics and Political Science

on Saturday 7 June 2025

from 9.30 am



Further information will be announced at the AGM on 29 March 2025
at 10.30 am (Meeting ID: 884 5730 8850, Passcode 7e28JN)



The 2024/25 John Martin Lecture

Is expected to take place in November 2025

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



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

Editorial

This Turkish Areas Studies *Review* has been very much delayed, and we apologise for that. Both co-editors are quite unwell, but we still carried on. This will, however, be the last *Review* under the present co-editorship. Mina Toksöz has indicated that she will definitely withdraw from this task. In fact she has stepped into this edition once more only as Acting Co-editor. BATAS and the second co-editor(!) are extremely grateful for her valuable contribution over the years and will very much miss her thorough mind and approach to this role, not to mention the fact that she has many connections to Turkish academics and was able to persuade a variety of people with very different interests in the Turkic world to contribute articles for this *Review*.

Both of us are, however, very pleased and proud to be able to present yet another edition of the *Review* with an enormously varying content. The 101st anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye is captured by a personal speech of Ambassador Ertaş and a thorough book review by Professor Hale. The membership is informed again about the present situation in Türkiye by Andrew Finkel (it may well be his last contribution as he is retired and as a perfectionist is unwilling to be imprecise) and it was deeply appreciated that he could be persuaded once more. We are treated to a piece about Cyprus from a Greek and therefore international perspective by Mary Southcott. This is followed by two economic articles, one historic (Polat Üründül), reminding us of the Özal/Thatcher era; the other (Arzu Şahin) on recent findings of the 5th workshop on the Political Economy in Turkey at the LSE.

The LGBTQ webinar run by Mustafa Özbilgin dealt with an important issue; it was attended by many of us. The articles under the rubric 'History, Society & Culture' by Leyla Erbil, Esra Okyay and Gemma Masson take us into new themes exploring sources of inspiration of Turkish literature and the "cultural history of baklava" and two of them were made accessible because Mina Toksöz gave a helping hand.

We conclude with five remarkable book reviews by David Tonge, David Shankland, Arın Bayraktaroğlu, Çiğdem Balım and William Hale.

The co-editors are always deeply indebted to all the contributors and are very grateful to the proof-readers S Parkin, J Sindall, and R A Martin. Any further help with proof-reading would be very welcome. And – of course – we need at least one co-editor, if not two, and as usual we would more than welcome suggestions of anyone who might be approached for an article or review.

Sigrid-B Martin
Co-Editor

Mina Toksöz
Acting Co-Editor

101 years of the Turkish Republic



On the occasion of the 101st Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic, H.E. O. Koray Ertaş, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye, and Mrs Sevcan Ertaş welcomed guests at a Reception on Tuesday, 29th October 2024, between 12:30 and 2 p.m.



E Toker-Turnalar, Chair of BATAS, Sevcan Ertaş, S-B Martin, co-editor of *BATAS Review*, H.E Koray Ertaş, A Bayraktaroğlu

and this was his address to us all

Dear Guests and Friends,

Thank you for sharing our joy as we celebrate the 101st anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. This day reminds us of the vision and courage of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the founders of our Republic.

The declaration of the Republic in 1923 marked the triumphant conclusion of our War of Independence.

The subsequent reforms led to rapid modernisation, transforming our country into a vibrant society and a democratic nation. We will continue to prosper along this vision.

This year, we mark our National Day with heavy hearts due to the recent terrorist attack in Ankara. We extend our deepest sympathies to all affected by this heinous act and reaffirm our commitment to countering terrorism in all its forms.

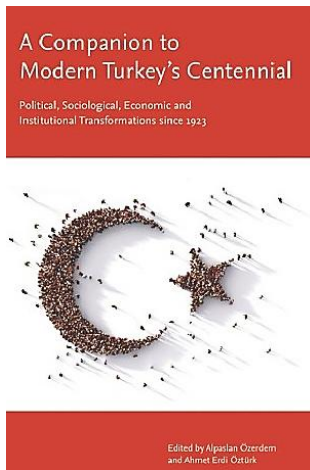
Our relations with the UK are steadily growing as we strengthen our strategic partnership. Our bilateral ties span key sectors such as trade, investment, tourism, sustainability, AI, education, defence, and security.

As NATO allies and strategic partners, our countries are committed to strengthening this partnership, including through an upgraded free trade agreement.

I extend my gratitude to all of you for joining us today.

On this occasion, we remember with gratitude Atatürk and all those who spent their lives for our country.

Dr O Koray Ertaş



A Companion to Modern Turkey's Centennial

Political, Sociological, Economic and Institutional Transformations since 1923

edited by **Alparslan Özerdem** and **Ahmet Erdi Öztürk**

Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2023. 724 + xv pp.
ISBN 878 1 4744 9251 5.

If they last long enough, states founded by revolutions are apt to mark their hundredth birthday with a robust celebratory flourish. Thus, in 1876, the United States celebrated the centenary of the Declaration of Independence with a grand Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia. Thirteen years later it was the turn of Paris to celebrate the hundred years since the French revolution with the *Exposition Universelle* of 1889, of which the Eiffel Tower is the lasting memorial. The centenary celebrations of the Turkish Republic in 2023, such as they were, were much more low-key. This was not because there was nothing to celebrate, but that celebration was inevitably muted by the continuing problems, doubts, anxieties and disagreements – political, economic, social and cultural – which still preoccupied domestic as well as international opinion. This massive collection of diverse articles, part of an expanding programme of publications on Turkey by Edinburgh University Press, reflects these mixed feelings. It is the work of an impressive collection of scholars, who examine the lasting problems and new anxieties as well as the achievements of the Turkish republic's first hundred years.

As a preliminary, your reviewer has to admit that, when he agreed to review this ambitious book, he had entirely forgotten that, over a year earlier, he had himself written the foreword, without seeing the text. After talking to the Editor, he decided that he could still be objective enough to attempt a review. He faced a daunting task. With its 724 pages, divided into 53 chapters by 64 writers, the length and complexity of this collection makes a thorough assessment virtually impossible within a reasonable length. What follows is inevitably superficial and cursory at many points. At best, it can only give a summary assessment of a rich and diverse collection.

In the opening section, Levent Köker, Ioannis Grigoriadis and Hakkı Taş offer a summary of political developments from the birth of the Republic in 1923 to the beginning of the AKP government in 2002. As they point out, in spite of its achievements, Turkey's experiment in democracy has been limited by the continuation of a powerful authoritarian element and a strong state tradition. Conflicts between political ideologies, examined in the second section, may help to explain this. As Karabekir Akkoyunlu explains, there is not one 'Kemalism', but multiple 'Kemalisms', as rival groups of opinion seek to legitimise their own ideas by claiming 'Kemalist' authenticity. Today's Kermalists oppose the AKP



regime, but, unlike their predecessors, are without ties to the military and state bureaucracy. In separate papers, the roles of other ideological positions, leftism and liberalism are also considered. On the latter score, Turgut Özal was a liberal in economics, but he was hardly a liberal politically, and this has normally been a weak strain in republican Turkey.

The third section, which runs to seven chapters. It starts with a useful summary of the history of democracy in Turkey by E Fuat Keyman and Canan Trulus Türk, which includes an important section on democratic backsliding since 2015. In recounting the story of civil-military relations since 1923, Gencer Özcan concludes that the failed coup of 15 July 2016 ‘lessened, if not terminated altogether, the political agency of the once omnipotent military’ (p 129). Following a chapter on state identity, the development of party politics since 1923 is recounted, with the subtitle that ‘nothing is different, but everything is changed’ (p 144). Taptuk Emre Erkoç then outlines the development of the political economy, concluding that recent developments have led to a renewed understanding of the original Kemalist experience. In a short paper on human rights, Nate Schenckan admits that ‘to explain is not to excuse’ (p 181) but does not suggest how obvious current defects could be overcome. The last two chapters in this section deal with the clash between secularism and Islam, and the less well studied institutional history of the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

Conflicts and fault lines in Turkish society and politics are dealt with in the fourth section of the compendium. This starts with a study of the non-Muslim population, noting the ‘continuous violation’ of their rights (p 215). Subsequent chapters outline the past, present and possible future of the Alevites, and then the relations between Turkey and Armenia (albeit with no analysis of the critical issue of genocide). The evolution of the Kurdish question over the last century is then considered, with important material on the relations between the PKK and the ‘Barzani bloc’ which controls the northern part of Iraqi Kurdistan and has generally positive relations with Turkey. The final chapter in this section carries on the story, by outlining attempts to achieve a peace settlement with the militant Kurdish nationalists, regretting that the Turkish state has failed to follow a ‘lessons-learned approach’ (p 274).

The collection’s fifth section, dealing with foreign policy, is the longest, with its 15 chapters stretching to just under 200 pages – in effect, a separate book in itself. It opens with an introductory paper by Ayla Göl on Turkey’s foreign relations between 1923 and 1948 drawing attention to the interplay between domestic and foreign policies. After a chapter covering foreign relations during the cold war period, the account of subsequent developments is divided into two papers, the first dealing with the crisis in relations between Turkey and the United States, with conflicting interests and policies in the Syrian Civil War, and the second with the parallel development of relations between Turkey and Moscow during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. On the first score, Ömer Taşpınar suggests that the conflict in Syria was a symptom, rather than the cause of the malaise between Ankara and Washington. He also touches on the problem of the US-Israeli alliance in the relationship, which has caused further damage since he wrote. On the second score, Paul Kubicek makes the simple point that Turkey’s relations with its northern neighbour improve when Turkey is alienated from the western powers but asks whether the mechanism may work the other way round – that Turkey can afford to distance itself from the west when relations with Russia improve.

This account of relations between Turkey and the super-powers (assuming Russia still qualifies as one) is followed by three papers on its relations with Greece, the Cyprus problem, and disputes over offshore rights in the eastern Mediterranean which involve the three countries. This is followed by discussion of Turkish policy towards the Balkans, Central Asia and the South Caucasus – critical theatres in Turkey’s neighbourhood which have received much less attention in scholarly literature. Two



succeeding papers deal with Turkey’s complex and critical relations with its middle eastern neighbours – one dealing with the topic in general, outlining the historical background since 1923, and the second on the problems thrown up by the ‘Arab spring’ and its subsequent collapse. Turkish policy in north Africa, especially Libya, is the subject of a separate paper, with Turkish policy in sub-Saharan Africa – virtually untouched in most previous studies of Turkish foreign policy – explained in an important intervening paper. This is followed by two chapters on much more familiar topics, dealing with relations between Turkey and the EU, and the ‘ebb and flow’ of seven decades of Turkey’s relations with its western allies. The final paper in this section outlines the story of Turkey’s emergence as a global aid actor, on which editor Alpaslan Özerdem gives us valuable and original information.

The last two sections of this weighty collection are especially important since they take up diverse themes – economic development, and social cum cultural change – which have been generally neglected by previous scholarship. In the first of these, a succession of authors provides original information on evolving agricultural policies, urbanisation, hydraulic infrastructure, and energy policy. In succeeding chapters, the focus shifts to social policy and environmental protection (such as it currently is). Disaster risk management, following the 1999 earthquake and other natural disasters, is the subject of a separate original chapter.

The final section deals with social and cultural change, looking at policies towards youth and demographic challenges, the development of the higher education system, civil society and the problems it faces, and gender and sexuality. International migration is covered in three separate chapters, considering both outward and inward movement of migrants and the current inflow of refugees from Turkey’s troubled southern and eastern neighbours. The role of the mass media, and its current restriction, sport and politics, and art and its polarisation, are covered in two other papers. The final chapter is by Cengiz Candar, a former adviser to President Turgut Özal, and one of Turkey’s best known writers on politics, in which he suggests that Turkey is now breaking with the west and ‘sailing with Eurasian winds’.

Some may argue that Candar under-rates Turkey’s continued links with the United States, the EU and the rest of NATO, but his suggestion provides a thought-provoking end to an strikingly wide-ranging compendium. Few readers are likely to read the whole book from cover to cover, and its price (Amazon quotes £125.00) and sheer physical size makes it likely that most readers will consult library copies, and then only those chapters which interest them. Its sheer length, and the fact that there is often substantial overlap between separate chapters on the same or closely related topics prompts the suggestion that it might have been better to opt for fewer, if longer chapters by collaborating writers. Alternatively, the book could have been broken down into, say, three more focussed volumes, dealing with politics, international relations, and economic, social and cultural topics respectively. Even as it stands, however, this

'Companion' should provide a useful source of reference for a huge range of potential readers.

William Hale

Emeritus Professor, SOAS, London

Politics & Economics



Political Events in Turkey

Andrew Finkel

Correspondent & Columnist, was based in Turkey for over 30 Years,
Co-founder of P24, an Istanbul-based NGO for
freedom of expression and press integrity

Turkey maintained an air of chaos-as-usual in the aftermath of the major humiliation of the long presiding government party (AKP) at the March 2024 local elections. The conundrum of how to retain office in the face of a badly-damaged economy preoccupies Turkey's rulers, affecting their willingness to cooperate with civil society and accept dissent. An additional layer to these considerations is the international context – the need to retain the good will of international financial institutions to escape the quagmire of high-inflation. This imposes limits on Turkey's defiant sense of isolation (euphemistically called "strategic autonomy"¹) as conflicts rage nearby in Ukraine and the Middle East. Breaking news, the sudden fall of Bashar al-Assad reportedly at the hands of factions which Turkey supports, has bolstered Ankara's regional influence and could present President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's with a foreign policy 'win' to shore up his domestic standing. For the moment, his political agenda remains in thrall to pragmatic concerns how to circumvent the constitutional restrictions that hinder him from seeking another presidential term when his current one expires in 2028.

The elephant in the room of Turkish politics is the AKP's failure to translate success in the 2023 general and presidential election into victories in the 31 March 2024 municipal elections. On the contrary, this was the Justice and Development (AKP)'s worst ever electoral performance. Losses included the mayorships of previous Anatolian (non-coastal) strongholds like Bursa and Denizli. The opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) not only retained the mayorship of the Ankara with an increased margin (60% to 30% compared to 51% to 47% in 2019) but also gained control over the all-important municipal council, a pattern repeated in cities elsewhere. This weakened the AKP central government's hold on levers of patronage such as construction permits that would allow it to rebuild its base. In Istanbul, the CHP's

¹ <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/strategic-autonomy-as-a-dynamic-of-convergence-in-turkiye-eu-relations?lang=en>

previous lead in the mayoral contest widened by 10% (51% to 39%) and the party overturned AKP control of long-held inner-city boroughs like Üsküdar and Beyoğlu.

AKP also faced being outflanked on the religious right by the New Welfare Party (YRP), a revitalized offshoot of the old Welfare Party from which Erdoğan, himself a former mayor of Istanbul, had launched his political career. The party accused AKP of hypocrisy over its support for Gaza and was able not so much to dog whistle as trumpet call on core conservative issues, including a blatant denial of gender equality. The YRP secured 6.2% of the overall national poll, enough to win control of Şanlıurfa and Yozgat and to divide the vote to hand the mayorship of Kütahya, previously held by the AKP, to the CHP.

The reasons for AKP's defeat require no great explanation given the state of the economy and the real hurt felt particularly by those on fixed incomes. Responsibility for this falls squarely on 'Erdonomics' – the gravity defying, populist policies of the president which posited that lowering interest rates would also lower inflation. Predictably, this did not happen. Inflation reached an annual rate of 61.8% in July 2024, forcing banks to dispense enormous amounts of currency, enough to cause ATM's to fail.²

This placed the Treasury between the Scylla of getting the economy back on track through painful austerity and the Charybdis of muddling through with lax monetary policies, i.e. spreading that pain but also rendering the economy vulnerable to a sudden shock. At present the government remains committed to the implementation of a medium-term economic package overseen by Mehmet Şimşek, the finance minister whose credentials are generally accepted by the international finance community. The Turkish Central Bank, widely regarded as lacking independence, has kept monetary policy tight, interest rates high (50% last July) and the currency stable. These policies inevitably put pressure on household budgets but also the inner circle of government cronies. Pressures to resume inflationary spending are already intense and Minister Şimşek is by no means secure in his job. By November 2024, the annual rate of inflation was down to a still hefty 47.1% but questions remain whether voters will feel more confident about their future in time of the next national election.

To cope, the government continues its heavy-handed approach to dissent – despite having at its disposal the estimated control of 90- 95% of commercial and state media.³ While the number of journalists in prison fell to 29 as of November 2024, the systematic harassment of media, judicial and otherwise, has if anything, got worse. For the first nine months of 2024, on average 55 journalists appeared in court every month (including the summer months when the courts were in recess). In the 78 cases against journalists that were sentenced to a total of 111 years in prison.⁴ The courts have also been weaponised against political opponents, most notably Istanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu. He is widely regarded as the most viable contender against Erdoğan at a future presidential contest but would face a political ban if a conviction is upheld for defaming the



² <https://www.intellinews.com/turkey-s-onverworked-atms-bust-under-weight-of-worthless-lira-banknotes-350229/>

³ https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-net/2023?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁴ <https://www.expressioninterrupted.com/freedom-of-expression-and-the-press-agenda-no-let-up-in-judicial-pressure-or-threats-against-journalists/>

Supreme Election Council (a press release called the body ‘fools’ for annulling the 2019 mayoral election which he went on to refight and win). Meanwhile, the charismatic Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtaş has spent the last eight years in prison despite European Court of Human Rights rulings for his release.

Opinion polls suggest the governing party still shedding support, particularly among younger voters,⁵ though the opposition CHP has not fully capitalized on this discontent. Since November 2023, the CHP has been led by Özgür Özel, whose less confrontational style contrasts with his predecessor, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Özel’s face-to-face meeting with Erdoğan in May and the President’s visit to CHP headquarters a month later (the first in 18 years) marked a rare instance of civility. However, this did not prevent Erdoğan from seeking damages for insult and slander after Özel criticized him for behaving dictatorially. This occurred at a large public rally and was in reaction to the removal by central fiat of the Istanbul borough Mayor of Esentepe, Ahmet Özer, and his replacement with a government-appointed trustee. Professor Özer, a distinguished urban sociologist,⁶ was arrested on what are almost certainly trumped-up charges that a phone call he made ten-years previously aided and abetted PKK terrorism. Why he was targeted defies easy explanation. The best guess is that this was a warning shot across İmamoğlu’s bows and part of pressure to oblige the CHP to negotiate constitutional changes that would allow Tayyip Erdoğan to seek yet another term in office.

Indeed, many regard the philosopher’s stone that would make sense of events in Turkey to be the dilemma faced by Turkish president. He came to that office through a direct vote in 2014, effected a change to a presidential system which allowed him to be elected for two further terms – in 2018 and 2023. Few believe, however, his assurances⁷ that he will throw in the towel when his constitutionally permitted final term comes to an end in 2028. To retire would be to bequeath to a rival the formidable institution he created and arbitrary powers he enjoys. A quiet retirement might not be an option. The political agenda remains, therefore, in thrall to the president’s pragmatic concerns of how to circumvent restrictions of seeking a further period in office. The legal choices are between a rock and a hard place – to go for an early election in which he would be permitted to stand (albeit risking defeat) or go through the arduous process of amending the constitution. Either option requires the support of the opposition parties, either the CHP or the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Equality and Democracy Party (DEM) – as well as a change in the mindset of an authoritarian leadership unused to compromise. To get opposition support (i.e. getting turkeys to vote for Christmas) would mean promulgating a return to a parliamentary system away from the super-presidential system which Erdoğan worked so hard to forge and/or enshrining Kurdish rights into the constitution. This latter would win no favours with the electorate at large, let alone AKP’s current de facto coalition partner- the ultra-nationalist National Action Party (MHP).

This dilemma may also explain the strange overture which Devlet Bahçeli, leader of the MHP, made seemingly to resolve a Kurdish problem (albeit a problem whose

⁵ https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/10/16/turks-lean-negative-on-erdogan-give-national-government-mixed-ratings/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁶ <https://bianet.org/haber/who-is-ahmet-ozel-the-arrested-mayor-of-istanbul-s-esenyurt-district-301277>.

⁷ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-says-march-election-will-be-his-final-state-media-reports-2024-03-08/>

existence his party denies). It started on 1 October when Bahçeli went out of his way to shake hands with DEM MPs on the floor of the National Assembly, a spectacle no less surprising than had Ian Paisley invited the Pope out for a pint. One suggestion is that the MHP were taunting the AKP to manage without their support. This was followed three weeks later with Bahçeli suggesting the Abdullah Öcalan, the incarcerated leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) would be eligible for parole and could be invited to address the DEM caucus in parliament – provided he renounced the armed struggle. An answer of sorts came the following day when two assailants mounted a suicide mission on a TUSAŞ factory (Turkish aerospace) outside Ankara, killing 5 people and wounding 22 others.⁸

That attack was also remarkable for entirely incidental reasons. President Erdoğan issued his condemnation from the Brics summit in Kazan where he had talks with Vladimir Putin but failed to gain Turkey's full admission to an organisation which would allow Turkey to steer a path away from its European allies.⁹ This is an option much favoured by a so-called Eurasianist faction which has long seen Russia a better model for Turkey than the EU. Secondly, reporting of the assault was subject to a news blackout.

Such restrictions on the media have become all too common. Individuals are still prosecuted for tweets and in one bizarre instance,¹⁰ an impertinent smile. The withdrawal on a technicality of the terrestrial broadcasting licence of the long-standing alternative community radio station Açık Radyo¹¹ – which played such an important role in organising relief efforts in the 1999 earthquake – is a grim indicator of the role of media regulatory bodies including the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) in controlling the flow of information. Already, a 'disinformation law' embedded in the Turkish Criminal Code has been used to launch nearly 5,000 criminal investigations and hundreds of lawsuits since it was enacted two years ago. Those concerned with media freedom have raised new concerns over a proposed amendment to espionage legislation, known as the "agents of influence", law which is similar in spirit to laws in Russia and Georgia used to block foreign funding for media and civil society organisations. The law has long been hovering over the National Assembly and may soon be reintroduced in the new year. Previous drafts have been so vaguely worded that in theory, the law could be used against the doorman of a foreign embassy who committed a parking offence or an academic attending a conference abroad.

Attempts at censorship have on occasion proved a double-edged sword. In early August, the Information and Communication Technologies Authority (or BTK) removed access to Instagram in apparent retaliation for the social media's censorship of content in support of Ismail Haniyeh, the prominent Hamas leader killed by an Israeli airstrike in Tehran. There was, however, no court decision or public explanation for the ban (apart from the unspecified charge of "catalogue crimes") and access was

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/oct/23/turkey-ankara-attack-explosion-aerospace-company-tusas>

⁹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-11-13/brics-stalls-decision-on-whether-to-admit-turkey-as-full-member>

¹⁰ <https://www.expressioninterrupted.com/freedom-of-expression-and-the-press-in-turkey-466/>

¹¹ <https://www.pen-international.org/news/trkiye-regulators-decision-to-shutter-ak-radyo-condemned>

restored after nine days albeit at a cost to the economy of \$57 million per day, according to the Istanbul Planning Agency (IPA), the municipal statistical agency.¹²

While Ankara may hesitate to stray too far from international norms of human rights, it may also be calculating that those norms are shifting in its direction. Events across the border in Syria have raised morale, with the sudden fall of Damascus appearing to



vindicate Ankara's long-standing antipathy to the Bashar al-Assad. The reckoning is that it will assist in its efforts to repatriate at least some of an estimated 3 to 3.5 million Syrians who have taken refuge on Turkish soil. Reconstruction in Syria will benefit the Turkish construction



industry. As important, it confirms Turkey's role as a regional player, a point illustrated by news footage of Ibrahim Kalin, long-time presidential advisor and now head of Turkish national intelligence (MIT) praying at the Damascus's Umayyad Mosque.¹³ Being wise after the fact does not disguise that 'surprise' is the word most often used to describe the collapse and it is speculation whether Ankara helped mastermind events or was itself reacting to the pace at which they unfolded.

Few believe that regime change would have happened without Turkish backing, although Ankara's role in support of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) remains mildly opaque. Ankara certainly supported the parallel faction the Syrian National Army (SNA), the former Free Syrian Army, as an instrument against the quasi-autonomous Kurdish enclave in northeast Syria. The ascendancy of HTS leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa (nom de guerre, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani) is widely described as a Turkish win. Russia which had carried out airstrikes against HTS positions in Aleppo at the beginning of the 'Jihadi Blitzkrieg' in December¹⁴ appears to have been ultimately hidebound by its engagement in Ukraine. The Israeli offensive against Hezbollah helped neuter Iranian influence in the region. The key catalyst appears to have been the inability of the Baathist government to remunerate its soldiery who simply lost the will to defend.¹⁵ It remains to be seen what sort of polity will emerge from the ruins of Syria. Domestically, Erdoğan hopes this foreign policy success will boost his domestic standing, though recent history warns that regime changes in neighbouring states carry significant risks. One of these may be that an increasingly isolated Iran will accelerate its efforts to develop a nuclear deterrent. How an Israel unrestrained by the new US president might respond is also fuel for speculation.¹⁶

Indeed, the known unknown of Turkish politics is how the Trump presidency will affect bilateral relations and Turkey's ability for regional manoeuvre. President Erdoğan has shown no great belief in the post-war liberal order nor demonstrated any great affection for Nato. His dealing with allies is most often described as 'transactional' (the case in point being his foot-dragging over approving Sweden's accession to Nato in

¹² <https://www.agbi.com/media/2024/08/turkey-instagram-hits-ecommerce/>

¹³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-12-12/turkey-spy-chief-ibrahim-kalin-visits-syria-mosque>

¹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khneOnmHAGY>

¹⁵ <https://countercurrents.org/2024/12/the-fall-of-the-assad-government-in-syria/>

¹⁶ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/syria-crisis-assad-defeat-geopolitics-region-us-iran-russia-turkey/>

return for concessions on Turkey's ability to purchase F-16s¹⁷) and in that sense a man after Donald Trump's own heart. At the same time, many of Trump's new appointees, including the pick for Secretary of State Marco Rubio have been volubly critical of Turkish policy.¹⁸ Tulsi Gabbard, the new Director of National Intelligence-in-waiting once described Erdoğan as a 'radical Islamist megalomaniac' who helps ISIS,¹⁹ although to be fair she has said similarly harsh things about Trump.

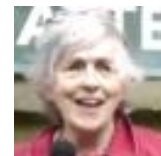
Turkey's domestic and international manoeuvring reflects a regime grappling with economic problems, growing opposition, and a leader determined to retain power despite mounting challenges.



Cyprus 20 years later

by **Mary Southcott**

Editor of *Cyprus Briefing*,
Secretary of the
Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform.



Anniversaries are a way of looking at history. We choose which anniversaries depending on what we want to emphasise or the direction we want to go in. For Cyprus perhaps we should look forward rather than back. But we could choose as others have: 60 years of Cyprus Independence; 50 years of UNFICYP, when the UN began its force in Cyprus; we could go back to the beginning of the 21st century; Cyprus' entry to the EU 20 years ago. I chose 20 years partly because a Foreign Office official challenged me to show that anything had changed in Cyprus since we both last worked on this part of the world two decades ago. I did so with pleasure because the evidence was mostly on my side. If one is listening to the old and new leaders then Turkish Cypriot Leader, Ersin Tatar, elected over four years ago overturning Mustafa Akıncı with the help of Turkey, is talking of a two-state solution and recognition which is no closer than when Rauf Denktash called for both after 1974 and after he set up the unrecognised, except by Turkey itself, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Mustafa Akıncı was willing to think in terms of a less dichotomised more devolved settlement. Some draw similarities between Nicos Christodoulides and Makarios and since 1974 other leaders, Glafkos Clerides, Tassos Papadopoulos, Nicos Anastasiades, and the outliers George Vassiliou and Dimitris Christofias, have lived with two thirds of Cyprus as the recognised state, almost as if Turkey had not occupied the north and made many of the decisions since then, satisfied it seems with their international recognition rather than seeking any change of the status quo formed by the 1974 cease fire line.

Looking at the leaders and what they say in public often, what the BBC monitors, gives the impression of status quo continuity but believing that nothing has changed is the

¹⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/01/26/politics/turkey-f-16s-sweden-nato-biden/index.html>

¹⁸ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/what-the-us-turkey-relationship-will-look-like-during-trump-2-0/>

¹⁹ <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/2019-10-31/ty-article/gabbard-blasts-turkeys-erdogan-as-radical-islamist-megalomaniac-who-helps-isis/0000017f-f152-dc28-a17f-fd7714080000>

mistake we make simply looking at official leaders. We are in a new world where people make a difference not just on the streets, but also in civil society, as citizens not just subjects. We cannot accept that the future belongs to people at the top of the hierarchical countries which are often democracies only in name and where international institutions and cooperation are downgraded and national states first parties are emergent with traditional parties losing to their right in many places. Although the BRIC, (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and the Global South is interesting. Where Cyprus sits in this is always a good question. It is now for these 20 years a member of the European Union with Malta and Ireland whereas its close relationship with the United Kingdom has been weakened by Brexit. Elsewhere the divide and rule operation worked much better and often continued after Britain left, if it did in fact leave. And of course Britain retained much of Cyprus as a Sovereign Base Area in Dhekelia, Ayios Nicolaos, Akrotiri, in Episkopi, bits around the island noticeably in the highest part of Cyprus in Troodos, so 254 square kilometres (2.7 percent of the total) is British military bases and installations, under the independence agreement, some of which the UK offered to hand back should the Annan Plan have been accepted by both communities in separate referendums in 2004.

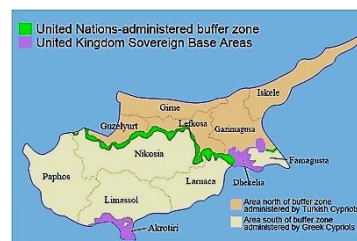
The Middle East still remains a legacy of colonial times when the Balfour Declaration backed the Jewish right to a state of their own in 1917 and the importation of the Black and Tans from Ireland when it got its Independence created an Ulster out of Israel to ensure Arab countries kept fighting. Who remembered that Ronald Storrs worked as the British Governor of Palestine and then went straight to Cyprus which is so close by that when weapons of mass destruction were said to be held in Iraq, and Cypriots did not flee because it was only 40 minutes away. Then the British Bases on Cyprus were used in the Iraq War and recently in some have said helping to get aid to Gaza and in other places surveillance of Gaza to help find the Israeli hostages or indeed members of Hamas or use of Akrotiri to rearm Israel. This remains under a D-notice as did the GCHQ/Ayios Nicolaou when trade unions were banned in Cheltenham in 1994 but not in Cyprus. The ABC trial was because Aubrey, Berry and Campbell wrote about this in the UK. Websites, particularly Declassified UK, undermine official statements by the British Government but it is generally assumed looking at air traffic since 7 October 2023 to Tel Aviv and over Gaza and personnel seen in the SBAs that the US particularly and of course the UK are using Akrotiri to rearm Israel and monitor the Palestine/Israel area, "from the river to the sea". Now that the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Yoav Gallant. Parliamentary Questions are either not answered or not published. The conversation goes on in Cyprus with anyone who follows the news knowing what is going on from the Bases, particularly of course Cyprus' Air Traffic Control and the Cypriots living and working there.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer judged after regime change in Syria in December that Cyprus was important enough, to visit. The first time a British Prime Minister had visited Cyprus since Ted Heath. He was later to visit the British troops in the British Sovereign Bases. He also laid a wreath at the statue of the first President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios, once thought of as a terrorist. What the British newspapers did not cover were the demonstrations against the British visit at UNFICYP where meetings took place and the role of Jonathan Powell who played a major part in the Good Friday Agreement with Northern



Ireland who met with both Greek and Turkish Cypriot Negotiators, Menelaus Menelaou and Güneş Öner²⁰.

So what is the evidence of change in the last twenty years? This can be dated back to the decision of the new President Erdoğan of Turkey in 2003, Prime Minister at the time, who encouraged, and Denktash resisted partial opening of the Green Line, which stretched from East to West, cuts Nicosia in two North/South. The Turkish Cypriot Leader predicted there would be bloodshed but what was reported was less than the average football match. This was on 23 April 2003 and many Cypriots headed north or south to discover parts of the island they had not seen since 1974 or 75 when they last left. The women's NGO, Hands Across the Divide, was registered in the UK. It is interesting how much decisions like that affected the vocabulary we use. Another contribution made from Turkish Cypriots who brought the phrase "deep state" into the discussion and not just of Turkey. Every little meeting from 1974 chiselled away a bit of that permanent division. At first all had to be abroad. International Conferences often allow people to discuss off piste. Then they fact re-entry and often denial. It is hard to believe now that Cypriots had to fly thousands of miles to meet in UK, US or EU cities. Friends of Cyprus based in the UK is just having its Reports digitised by the University of Cyprus.



Until this year, Cypriot Political parties are restricted to one community, but VOLT straddled the Green Line to stand in the European Parliamentary election. After 2003 Cypriots married each other, rewarded for that by a Prize by Stelios Haji-Ioannou, himself the Cypriot who founded Easy Jet. Joint slates had stood before in previous European elections but Volt was a party of Cypriots who supported the Bizonal Bicomunal Federation, the Green agenda, pluralist politics and attracted the Green MP, Alexander Attalides, along with other supporters, the writer and researcher Makarios Droussitis, and former leading players in the Green Party, Efi Xanthou.

To deal with a frozen conflict one needs to thaw it from the bottom up. The Bicomunal Peace Initiative, United Cyprus, is collaborating on opening Crossings or Check points along the Green Line. A group working with the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Center were recently invited to Washington DC along with the new Cyprus MEP. There is the Turkish Cypriot Nesil Caliskan elected in Barking in 2024 to join Bambos Charalambous MP, a Greek speaking Cypriot, both Labour, not to mention Meral Ece, a Liberal Democrat Peer. Universities and many other organisation and initiatives have organised events to support a settlement since the Leaders met in New York in mid-October 2024,



The Chagos Islands agreement is modelled on the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus, Nelson Mandela came out of prison, the Berlin Wall fell, wars end in peace negotiations. The Global North can help the Global South help them towards a better future for the planet. A solution that recognises Turkey's legitimate security concerns could be found without going for a hard two-state solution. If so, Turkey's relationship

²⁰ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/new-perspectives-on-turkey/article/renewing-hope-for-cyprus-peace-a-novel-approach-to-reconcile-the-negotiation-positions-of-the-turkish-cypriot-side-and-the-greek-cypriot-side/CFF799EFE07D33AF9BEBDB50920EBB13>.

with the EU will certainly improve as it is now with Greece. Cypriots can shape their own future. Artificial Intelligence can help overcome the two-language division or language teaching or English can. Films, books and drama, poetry and song can show alternatives to conflict and division. A shared island, an overlapping culture, especially food, can bring strength and resilience, and recognition that equality does not mean sameness but diversity. Look to 2025 for the discussion and decision to forge a Cyprus settlement. The world has more urgent things to attend to. What are we waiting for?



The Cherry on the Cake: Economic Relations between Türkiye and the United Kingdom in the Özal & Thatcher Era

by **Dr Polat Üründül**

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Türkiye and the United Kingdom (UK) have a longstanding history of friendly relations. Despite challenges such as the Cyprus issue and the Mosul crisis, ties between Türkiye and the UK remained positive after the Republic of Türkiye was established in 1923. Following the military coup in 1980 in Türkiye, the Turks managed to maintain a stable relationship with the British despite their deteriorating relations with other Western allies. This decline in Türkiye's relations with the West was a result of the military regime's suppression of democracy and abuse of human rights. With their pragmatic approach to foreign policy, the British sought to maintain a stable and constructive relationship with the Turks when everyone had turned their backs on them. Following the re-establishment of democratic governance in Türkiye and the election of Turgut Özal as the Prime Minister in 1983, the political and diplomatic ties between Türkiye and the UK even reached their peak. Mutual visits became more frequent than ever, the volume of trade between the two countries shattered all previous records, and improved cooperation between both nations within institutions such as the Council of Europe, NATO and the United Nations was observed. The similarities, harmony, and good personal relations between Turgut Özal and Margaret Thatcher undoubtedly played an important role in the development of bilateral relations, which in turn had a significant impact on economic relations. During the

period of the two 'homo economicus' leaders²¹, economic relations can be evaluated as the most prominent aspect of the special relationship between Türkiye and the UK.

Economic relations between Türkiye and Britain began to develop at a rapid pace under Margaret Thatcher and Turgut Özal. After Turgut Özal was elected as the PM in Türkiye in 1983, there was an 11 percent increase in the UK's exports to Türkiye. This was due to the growing interest of British companies in the Turkish market. For the British, Türkiye was already an important market full of opportunities. When democracy was restored, the significance of the Turkish market increased even more. Primary commodities exported by the UK to Anatolia were cars, transport equipment, machinery, and chemicals. In return, the UK imported most agricultural items from Türkiye.²² In 1984, the export of goods from Britain to Turkey increased by 40 percent²³ and 30 percent in the following year.²⁴ Furthermore, the transit of Iraqi oil through Turkish borders resulted in a significant increase in Türkiye's exports to the UK, with the shipments more than doubling by 1985.²⁵ While there was a strong desire among British corporations to engage in significant contracts in Türkiye such as the Second Bosphorus Bridge project, it was unfortunate that their efforts ultimately resulted in disappointment due to the issue of financial coverage. If this problem had been solved, even greater economic cooperation could have been seen between the two countries.

The British had also expressed a strong interest in participating in the Akkuyu nuclear power plant project. The lack of money and the cautious attitude of corporations towards the expected profit demanded by the Turkish government for the build-operate-transfer model have prevented an agreement from being reached for this project.²⁶ Between 1983 and 1986, the value of British exports to Türkiye increased by 122 percent, reaching a total of 434 million pounds and the two countries signed the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement to ease trade between them.^{27 28} In 1987, the British were fortunate to be able to contribute to a number of significant public sector projects, including the Ankara natural gas conversion project. Furthermore, it is worth noting that Turkish exports to the UK saw a notable increase of 42 percent during this period.²⁹ While trade relations between Türkiye and the UK had previously enjoyed a stable structure up until 1980, it was during the Thatcher and Özal eras that economic relations experienced a renewed sense of dynamism. To exemplify: Türkiye's exports to the UK were worth \$147.9 million in 1981, increasing to \$541 million in 1987. Simultaneously, British exports to Türkiye increased to \$697 million.

²¹ Üründül, P. (2023). *British-Turkish Relations from 1983 to 1993: The Emergence of a Special Relationship in the Özal and Thatcher Era* [Ph.D. - Doctoral Program]. Middle East Technical University.

²² The National Archives (TNA): FCO 9/4844, Political relations between Turkey and the UK 1984, Interview with Turkish Journalist. 2 July 1984 at 3.30 PM. Brief No. 1, p. 3

²³ TNA: FCO 9/5193, Political relations between Turkey and the UK, f 76, Secretary of State's Visit to UN General Assembly, Bilateral Brief: Turkey -Mr. Vahit Halefoglu.

²⁴ TNA: FCO 160/223/1, Diplomatic Documents, Turkey: Annual Review for 1984 p. 5.

²⁵ TNA: FCO 9/5512, Anglo/Turkish Political Director Talks: 18 June, p. 2.

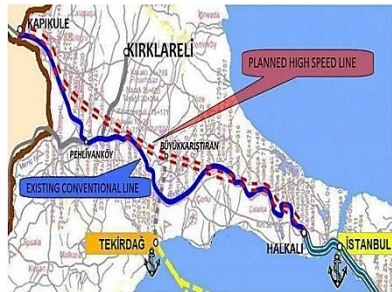
²⁶ Köse, B. (2020). Margaret Thatcher dönemi Türkiye-İngiltere ilişkileri [master's thesis]. KATÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.

²⁷ TNA: FCO 9/5513, Political Relations Between Turkey and the UK, Call by Professor Ali Bozer, 18 December 1986, Essential Facts UK Turkey Relations, pp 1-2.

²⁸ TNA: FCO 9/6180, f 2, p. 4.

²⁹ Margaret Thatcher Foundation. (n.d.). Joint Press Conference with Turkish Prime Minister (Turgut Özal). <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/107213>.

during the course of these six years.³⁰ By the end of 1987, UK capital was allocated to various Turkish enterprises with an approximate value of 30,851 million Turkish lira.³¹ In that year, 72 British companies were operating in Türkiye. Among those firms were British Steel Corporation, Shell, Unilever and BP.³² The British interest in the Turkish market increased consistently during the tenure of Thatcher and Özal, making



the British the largest foreign investors in Türkiye in 1989. Britain was also Türkiye's fifth largest trading partner in the world.³³ In 1989, the number of British firms operating in Türkiye rose to 104 with a 70 percent increase in only three years.³⁴ Türkiye's engagement with the newly established Turkic states in Central Asia, encouraged by Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel, also created new economic opportunities for the West. The Turks sought

the backing of Western countries, including the British, for the economic initiatives they were implementing in the Central Asian republics. In the meantime, the British had shown interest and submitted their proposals for a number of public projects in Turkey, including the Turksat Communications Satellite Project, the Bodrum Airport Project, the Çerkezköy-Kapıkule Railway Electrification Project, and the İzmir Water Supply Project.³⁵ The British aided the Turkish textile industry by facilitating the export of products to the European Community (EC). In 1990, President Turgut Özal corresponded with the British PM to express his thoughts on the voluntary restraint agreements that restrict Türkiye's textile imports to European nations. Consequently, the British Government requested the EC to accelerate the implementation of plans for liberalisation.³⁶ At the same time, British firms won tenders for Ankara Metro and Yok projects, and the Yenikapı Water Treatment Plant was built with a British contribution.^{37 38}

In 1990, the Turkish economy was facing specific challenges. However, British-Turkish trade ties remained positive, as British exports to Türkiye increased by 40 percent in comparison to 1989, reaching 606.8 million pounds. This figure was a record for the British.³⁹ Despite this positive trend in the beginning of the 1990s, the value of goods Türkiye exported to the UK underwent a decline from 744.786.000 dollars to 676.045.000 dollars in 1991, according to the T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet

³⁰ Kayacıklı, T. (1988). Turco-British commercial relations. *Middle East Business & Banking*, 7(4), 11–12.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² British and British Affiliated Companies Operating in Turkey. (1988). *Middle East Business & Banking*, 7(4).

³³ TNA: FCO 9/6660, Relations between Turkey and the UK, f 54, Opening Address by H.E. Nurver Tureş, Turkish Ambassador, at the business conference on “new opportunities in Turkey”, p 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, f 53, p 10.

³⁵ TNA: FCO 9/6698, Trade Relations between Turkey and the UK.

³⁶ TNA: FCO 9/6992, CSCE Summit: Paris: 19-21 November 1990, Bilateral Meeting with Mr Alptemocin (Turkey), p. 3, textiles).

³⁷ TNA: FCO 9/6992, Relations between Turkey and the UK 1990, From Mcclery for Bale, OT4/1B, Call by Ambassador Bleda on DTI Minister, p 3.

³⁸ TNA: FCO 9/6187, Visit by Prime Minister to Turkey 1988, f 35, MIPT: Prime Minister's Visit to Turkey, Revised Programme, p 3.

³⁹ TNA: FCO 9/7562, Trade relations between Turkey and the UK 1991, f 9, p. 3

İstatistik Enstitüsü in 1996.⁴⁰ However, the Turks continued to increase the volume of their exports to Britain in those years, and the total value of UK imports from Türkiye amounted to 835.075.000 dollars in 1993.⁴¹ One of the reasons why Türkiye's exports to the UK were negatively affected in 1991 could be the crisis in the Gulf region. Despite such a negative statistic, British exports to Türkiye consistently continued to increase, remaining unaffected.

Turkish & British Exports (1983 vs 1993)

Year	Turkish Exports	British Exports
1983	\$247.039.000	\$433.767.000 ⁴²
1993	\$835.075.000	\$1.545.696.000 ⁴³

A review of Anglo-Turkish relations during the Özal and Thatcher era reveals a positive trend in commercial relations as well. This can be attributed to the political and diplomatic relations between Türkiye and the UK that reached their zenith during that period. The British perceived the liberalisation of the Turkish economy in the 1980s as a favourable chance to establish a prominent presence in the Turkish market. To this end, they actively pursued significant public projects, fostered bilateral commerce, and made investments in Turkish enterprises. Between 1983 and 1993, there was a substantial expansion in bilateral trade, and the British actively participated in large public projects, including the Ankara Natural Gas and Yenikapı Water Treatment projects. Also the impact of neoliberalism was evident in the economic interdependence between Türkiye and the UK, as both countries adapted to this order. Thatcher and Özal were aware that economic growth would enhance their power in domestic politics and therefore prioritised the economy in their foreign policy preferences. For these reasons, the Özal and Thatcher era was a turning point for political and diplomatic relations between the two countries, and developing bilateral relations, reaching an all-time high under these progressive leaders, but also continuing to develop under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel and John Major. Türkiye and the UK maintained robust, multi-dimensional and stable relations in the following years, despite global problems and crises in Türkiye's region. Bilateral and economic relations between Türkiye and the UK reached an all-time high once again in the 2000s.

⁴⁰ T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü (1996). Türkiye ve dünya dış ticareti, 1950-1993 [Turkey and World Foreign Trade]. 70.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri - Foreign Trade Statistics. (1989). T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, p. 20.

⁴³ Dış Ticaret İstatistikleri - Foreign Trade Statistics. (1996). T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, p. 24.

5th London School of Economics Workshop on the Political Economy of Turkey

Hosted by the European institute, Contemporary Turkish Studies, School of Public Policy and Systematic Risk Centre at LSE

Friday 07 June 2024 9.30am to 6.30pm

Summary of key sessions by **Arzu Kircal Şahin**



From Elected to Appointed: The Economic Consequences of Local Authoritarian Takeovers

The study presented at a recent workshop investigated the economic consequences of replacing locally elected officials with centrally appointed executives in Turkey. Conducted by Fatih Serkant **Adıgüzel**, Mustafa **Kaba**, and Murat **Koyuncu**, the research utilised a difference-in-differences design to analyse state contracts. The findings revealed that centrally appointed mayors significantly reduced the use of competitive auctions, favouring non-competitive procedures nearly three times more often. This led to a 24% increase in contract prices and a 40% decrease in value for money, resulting in a 6% waste of overall procurement spending. The study highlights the detrimental impact of reduced local accountability on economic efficiency amidst rising authoritarianism.

The Effects of Subsidizing Social Security Contributions on Firms and Workers

Here the impacts of employment subsidies in Turkey are examined. Conducted by Güneş A. **Aşık**, Laurent **Bossavie**, Efsan **Nas-Ozen**, Metin **Nebiler**, and Ana Maria **Oviedo**, the research focused on a large-scale subsidy scheme covering employers' social security contributions. By employing a difference-in-differences methodology and using extensive administrative data, the study discovered that the subsidy significantly increased registered employment. This effect was mainly due to the formalisation of existing workers rather than the creation of new jobs. Moreover, the subsidy enhanced firm entry and decreased firm exit rates. The findings indicate that such subsidies can be effective in boosting formal employment in contexts where informal employment is widespread.

Endogenous Production Networks and Supply Chain Disruptions

Under this rubric the impact of supply chain disruptions on prices and productivity within production networks is examined. Conducted by Nuriye Melisa **Bilgin** from the

University of Turin, the research focused on the disruptions experienced by Chinese suppliers during the early lockdowns. The study revealed that firms dependent on Chinese imports increased their prices by 11% and saw a 24% decline in productivity. Using these empirical findings, Bilgin developed a model to simulate the formation of production networks and predict the effects of supply chain disruptions. The results highlight the significant economic impacts of supply chain shocks and the importance of efficient supplier selection in maintaining productivity.

All the 'Missing' Ladies: Competition Intensity and Political Selection

Here the impact of electoral competition on women's political representation in Turkey is explored. Conducted by Selcen **Çakır**, Elif **Erbay**, and Konstantinos **Matakos**, the research utilised the natural experiment of two consecutive legislative elections to examine changes in candidate selection. The findings revealed that heightened competition led to the removal and demotion of female candidates from the ruling JDP's lists, reversing a trend of increasing female representation. This exclusion was most pronounced in electable seats and conservative districts, suggesting both statistical and taste-based discrimination. A counterfactual analysis indicated that maintaining the original candidate lists would have increased female representation in parliament by 50%, highlighting the role of male-dominated party committees in perpetuating gender bias in political selection.

How does the Conflict Exposure of Husbands Affect Tolerance of Intimate Partner Violence among Married Women? Evidence from the Mandatory Conscription System in Turkey

The study presented at a recent workshop investigated how the conflict exposure of husbands affects the tolerance of intimate partner violence (IPV) among married women in Turkey. Conducted by Arzu **Kıbrıs**, Eren **Arbatlı**, and Cole **Williams**, the research utilised a natural experiment created by Turkey's mandatory conscription system. The study found that men assigned to conflict zones developed anger-management problems and elevated aggression, leading to more authoritarian behaviour. Consequently, their wives exhibited higher tolerance towards IPV, even among those without a history of IPV. This suggests that the perceived risk of aggression and authoritarianism makes women more submissive, shaping their views on IPV and reinforcing self-defeating norms. These findings highlight the role of men's conflict experiences in perpetuating a culture of violence and pose significant challenges to combating IPV.

Religious Devotion and Gender Equality: Parental Religiosity, Collective Conservatism, and Missing School-girls in Turkey

The impact of parental religiosity on gender equality in primary education in Turkey is examined. Conducted by Melike **Kökkızıl**, the research leveraged variations in the

Islamic calendar and the holy month of Ramadan to explore how parental devotion affects children's schooling. The findings revealed that increased parental religiosity during children's primary school enrolment years negatively impacted girls' education, while the effect on boys was statistically insignificant. This lack of education for girls subsequently deteriorated their labour market prospects. The study highlights that heightened religious activities reinforce traditional gender roles, leading to unequal parental investment in education. These insights underline the long-term consequences of religiosity on gender equality in education.

BATAS Webinar

LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Context:

Navigating Supportive and Unsupportive Environments

with a Focus on Turkey's Toxic Triangle

by **Mustafa F Özbilgin**

Professor of Human Resource Management
Brunel University of London



**BATAS Webinar - Online
June 2024**

Introduction

LGBTQ+ inclusion is a complex, dynamic process influenced heavily by contextual factors, which can either promote or hinder inclusivity. In settings where inclusive policies, behaviours, and laws are prevalent, LGBTQ+ individuals experience a higher sense of security and visibility, while in unsupportive contexts, discrimination, exclusion, and compulsory heteronormativity prevail. This essay delves into how different contexts impact LGBTQ+ inclusion, focusing on elements of supportive versus unsupportive environments, the lifecycle of discrimination, intersectionality, the "toxic triangle" in Turkey, and the unique challenges LGBTQ+ individuals face in diverse institutional settings.

Supportive and unsupportive contexts for LGBTQ+ individuals vary significantly by region, and ILGA data reveals significant disparities in legal protections and acceptance across nations. In supportive contexts, LGBTQ+ individuals benefit from inclusive laws, protective policies, and societal acceptance, which foster visibility, security, and equitable treatment. For instance, many Western nations, such as Canada, Western Europe, and Australia, exhibit inclusive policies allowing LGBTQ+ individuals to live and work openly, reflecting broader national commitments to equality and non-discrimination (ILGA, 2022). These inclusive policies correlate with advanced

legal frameworks for LGBTQ+ rights, including anti-discrimination protections and marriage equality, demonstrating a holistic approach to inclusivity. Conversely, unsupportive contexts – predominantly observed in the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia – enforce legal restrictions against LGBTQ+ individuals alongside other forms of systemic exclusion. Countries in these regions often maintain bans on LGBTQ+ individuals, reinforcing cultural and religious norms that stigmatise LGBTQ+ identities and limit their visibility in public institutions. Such restrictive policies are usually indicative of broader societal hostility, as these nations frequently lack anti-discrimination laws or other protections for LGBTQ+ individuals, creating environments where LGBTQ+ individuals must navigate marginalisation and concealment for personal safety (Küskü, Aracı, & Özbilgin, 2021). The ILGA data underscores how legal frameworks and societal attitudes coalesce to either support or hinder LGBTQ+ rights, showing that inclusive policies are closely tied to broader patterns of social acceptance and protection.

The Importance of Context in LGBTQ+ Inclusion

The notion of ‘context’ is multifaceted, covering spatial, temporal, cultural, and regulatory dimensions. These varying aspects shape the experiences and degree of acceptance for LGBTQ+ individuals. First, the spatial context refers to the physical and social environments that shape LGBTQ+ experiences, from workplaces to public spaces. Second, the temporal context considers historical developments affecting LGBTQ+ rights, which vary significantly across regions (Chanlat & Özbilgin, 2023). The evolution of these contexts underscores the need for continuous adaptation in strategies for inclusion. Third, regulations play a critical role in either protecting or marginalising LGBTQ+ communities. In supportive contexts, laws prohibit discrimination, while unsupportive contexts may have criminalisation of LGBTQ+ lives and work and antagonistic policies that reinforce exclusion (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2023). Fourth, the cultural and symbolic contexts, influenced by societal norms and values, further impact inclusivity, as acceptance levels vary across cultures and can shift within the same region over time.

LGBTQ+ inclusion is highly contingent upon the regulatory and social structures that either encourage or restrict diversity. In supportive environments, protective laws and inclusive policies foster acceptance and integration. For instance, organisations that actively promote diversity and inclusion policies can provide a sense of security for LGBTQ+ employees, allowing for visibility without fear of reprisal (Knappert et al., in review; Özbilgin & Erbil, 2023). In unsupportive settings, discriminatory laws and exclusionary discourses lead to institutional and societal rejection of LGBTQ+ individuals. Such contexts often compel individuals to hide or ‘pass’ as heterosexual to avoid negative consequences (Roell et al., 2024). The “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in the US military exemplifies this dynamic, where silence about sexual orientation was mandated to maintain a semblance of conformity (Bell et al., 2011).

Hysteresis and LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Adversarial Contexts

The concept of hysteresis, derived from Pierre Bourdieu’s work, refers to the temporal disjuncture between progressive societal demands and traditional resistance. LGBTQ+ individuals in Muslim-majority countries, for example, encounter adversarial contexts where societal norms and legal frameworks resist progressive change. Covert allyship and transversal policies sometimes emerge as subtle support mechanisms in these environments, offering limited yet essential inclusion (Roell et

al., 2024). In unsupportive contexts, the visibility of non-binary and LGBTQ+ identities is often limited due to societal and institutional opposition. The persistence of traditional norms creates barriers to full inclusion, perpetuating a cycle of resistance and marginalisation (Bourdieu, 2020).

In an international context, hysteresis describes the lag between progressive societal demands for LGBTQ+ inclusion and the persistent resistance within traditional or conservative structures. This temporal disjuncture is especially pronounced in regions with entrenched cultural norms or strict legal frameworks that oppose rapid social change, as seen in many Muslim-majority countries. Here, LGBTQ+ visibility and legitimacy often face significant barriers, not only due to formal policies but also societal attitudes that maintain heteronormative standards. In these contexts, subtle support mechanisms such as covert allyship and transversal policies emerge, enabling LGBTQ+ individuals to find community and support despite adversarial conditions (Roell et al., 2024). For example, LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives in specific workplaces may be hindered by a lack of alignment between international diversity practices and local cultural expectations, leading to "hysteresis" where inclusive organisational policies are implemented without local acceptance (Özbilgin & Erbil, 2023). The concept of hysteresis, derived from Bourdieu, illustrates how progress in LGBTQ+ rights and recognition is often slowed by deep-rooted traditional values, making comprehensive inclusion challenging and reinforcing the need for both top-down and bottom-up approaches to effect lasting change (Bourdieu, 1984).

The Toxic Triangle of Diversity in Turkey

In Turkey, the concept of a "toxic triangle" explains how LGBTQ+ inclusion faces systemic challenges due to a combination of hostile leadership, vulnerable followers, and a conducive environment for exclusion. This concept, developed by Küskü, Aracı, and Özbilgin (2021), highlights how these elements intersect to perpetuate discrimination and limit the effectiveness of diversity policies. In the Turkish context, leadership attitudes toward LGBTQ+ rights often reflect nationalistic or conservative ideologies, which contribute to unsupportive policies. Leaders may actively discourage diversity by emphasising traditional values and suppressing LGBTQ+ visibility. This aspect of the toxic triangle creates a climate where diversity efforts are either ignored or openly challenged, making it difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals to gain acceptance in professional and social settings (Küskü et al., 2021).

Vulnerable followers, in this context, refer to LGBTQ+ individuals who lack institutional support and face social and economic precarity. Without supportive laws or inclusive practices, LGBTQ+ individuals may feel compelled to conform to societal norms to maintain employment or social ties. This dynamic perpetuates a cycle of marginalisation, where LGBTQ+ individuals are systematically disempowered and lack the resources to challenge discrimination (Küskü et al., 2021).



The Turkish socio-political landscape, marked by conservative cultural values and restrictive laws, creates an environment conducive to maintaining the status quo of exclusion. The legal framework in Turkey provides minimal protection for LGBTQ+ individuals, often reinforcing traditional norms and making it challenging for LGBTQ+ advocacy to gain traction. This environment supports the toxic triangle, where leadership and vulnerable

followers are locked into a cycle that impedes progress in diversity and inclusion (Küskü et al., 2021).

The 'toxic triangle' in Turkey reveals the barriers to diversity management within organizations and institutions. By reinforcing exclusionary practices and beliefs, the toxic triangle limits both personal and professional growth for LGBTQ+ individuals and discourages organisations from adopting meaningful diversity policies. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for identifying potential pathways for institutional change, especially through international pressure and the support of allies who can advocate for inclusivity despite local constraints.

Including LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey holds significant global importance, as Turkey uniquely bridges Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Its stance on LGBTQ+ rights indicates broader regional trends and can influence neighbouring countries both positively and negatively. With a blend of secular and conservative influences, Turkey's approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion serves as a critical case for understanding how diverse cultural, political, and religious contexts affect LGBTQ+ rights. In the international arena, advancing LGBTQ+ inclusion in Turkey could strengthen its partnerships with global entities, such as the European Union and the United Nations, emphasising human rights and inclusivity. Turkey's progress in this area would also resonate in nearby regions, signalling to other Muslim-majority countries that LGBTQ+ rights can coexist with cultural and religious identities. This global impact underscores the importance of Turkey's role in setting a positive example for LGBTQ+ inclusivity in contexts where such discussions are often contentious.

For Turkey to advance LGBTQ+ inclusion meaningfully, state institutions and individual actors must play active roles. The Turkish state could begin by revising and implementing anti-discrimination laws that explicitly protect LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace, healthcare, and education sectors. These legal protections would establish a formal foundation for inclusion and signal the government's commitment to equality. State institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights organisations, should enforce these protections while educating the public about LGBTQ+ issues to foster societal acceptance. On an individual level, academia, business, and civil society allies can advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and work to normalise inclusive practices in their circles of influence. By supporting LGBTQ+ organisations, promoting LGBTQ+ visibility, and championing diversity in workplaces, these actors can help counteract societal stigma. Together, state and individual efforts would not only improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people in Turkey but would also elevate Turkey's standing as a progressive, inclusive nation in the global community.

The Lifecycle of Discrimination and Inequality

Discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals follows a lifecycle beginning with early socialisation in family, education, and religious institutions, progressing into the workplace and other domains such as healthcare and law enforcement. First, there is the institutionalisation of compulsory heteronormativity internationally. Many societies enforce heteronormative standards that marginalise LGBTQ+ individuals from an early age, manifesting in various institutions throughout life (Öztürk & Özbilgin, 2014). The lifecycle of discrimination illustrates how heteronormative expectations persist, shaping societal attitudes from "cradle to grave." However, there are also progressive developments with cycles of new normativities emerging around LGBTQ+ identities. There is a gradual but significant shift from compulsory heterosexuality towards recognition and normalisation of LGBTQ+ identities. This shift involves both legal and

social dimensions, pushing for inclusivity as a societal norm, though challenges remain, especially in traditionally conservative contexts (Özbilgin et al., 2023). However, the critical point remains that old normativities may be replaced by new normativities among LGBTQ+ individuals, leading to intragroup divisions and hostilities rather than prized forms of solidarity that could advance inclusion for this group.

The intersection of LGBTQ+ identity with other social categories such as race, religion, and socioeconomic status often intensifies discrimination, with experiences varying across contexts. Hostile intersections occur in unsupportive environments, where overlapping marginalised identities compound discrimination. Conversely, supportive settings can foster intersectional solidarity, allowing LGBTQ+ individuals to engage in activism and allyship across diverse backgrounds (Kamasak et al., 2020). In contexts where LGBTQ+ identities are stigmatised, individuals often employ "passing" as a strategy for safety, leveraging defensive or strategic passing to navigate unsupportive institutions (Özbilgin et al., 2023). In inclusive environments, however, passing may serve an instrumental purpose, allowing individuals to leverage identity without erasing it.

The Role of LGBTQ+ Allies and Leadership in Inclusion

The influence of allies and LGBTQ+ leadership is crucial in both supportive and adversarial contexts, as they advocate for policies that promote diversity and inclusion. Leadership plays a significant role in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion within institutions. Leaders who are open about their LGBTQ+ identity can inspire others and foster inclusive environments by serving as visible role models. Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, exemplifies this, as his public acknowledgment of being gay has provided comfort and inspiration to many (Samdanis & Özbilgin, 2021). LGBTQ+ leaders often face dilemmas in balancing advocacy for inclusivity with maintaining personal privacy. They may need to navigate competing demands of visibility and privacy to foster a sense of belonging among their peers (Baş et al., 2024).

To advance LGBTQ+ inclusion globally, a multifaceted approach involving international bodies, nation-states, LGBTQ+ social movements, and state regulators is essential. International bodies, such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, should strengthen policies that mandate the protection of LGBTQ+ rights as fundamental human rights. These bodies can issue binding resolutions and create frameworks encouraging member states to adopt inclusive laws, with monitoring mechanisms to ensure accountability. Nation states, in turn, are pivotal in translating these international norms into local legislation. By implementing anti-discrimination laws, recognising same-sex unions, and protecting LGBTQ+ individuals in the workforce, nation-states can build inclusive legal and social systems that support LGBTQ+ rights. State regulators play a crucial role in enforcing these laws, providing oversight, and ensuring that legal protections are upheld, especially within regions or sectors where discriminatory practices persist.

LGBTQ+ social movements are fundamental to this mission, mobilising public support, advocating for legal reforms, and raising awareness of LGBTQ+ issues. These movements create the societal momentum needed to influence policy, often bridging the gap between citizens and government entities. By lobbying for inclusive laws, educating the public, and partnering with international organisations, these social movements can make tangible impacts on both local and global levels. For example,



Pride events and LGBTQ+ advocacy campaigns raise visibility and highlight issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community, effectively challenging stereotypes and driving societal change. International support for these movements, including financial assistance and capacity-building initiatives from global non-profits, enhances their resilience and enables them to operate in countries with restrictive environments.

In the corporate and economic sphere, employers and industry leaders should implement diversity and inclusion policies that support LGBTQ+ employees. By establishing clear anti-discrimination guidelines, offering diversity training, and creating inclusive workplace environments, businesses can ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Employers who champion LGBTQ+ rights within their organisations can also inspire broader societal change by setting examples for inclusivity, influencing other businesses, and contributing to a culture of acceptance. Economic actors, including investors and consumers, also play a role by supporting companies that uphold LGBTQ+ rights, thereby incentivising inclusivity in the market. These actions can potentially reshape workplace culture globally, as multinational corporations often extend these policies across all operational regions, setting new standards for inclusivity worldwide.

Lastly, individual citizens significantly influence advocating for LGBTQ+ rights within their communities. Through voting, participating in local activism, or supporting LGBTQ+ organisations, citizens can directly impact public opinion and government priorities. In democratic societies, citizen-driven advocacy has led to substantial reforms, such as marriage equality and expanded workplace protections. Additionally, citizens who foster inclusive attitudes in everyday interactions, from schools to workplaces, create a social fabric that welcomes diversity. Together, the concerted efforts of international bodies, nation-states, social movements, corporate leaders, and citizens can establish robust, inclusive frameworks that respect and celebrate LGBTQ+ rights globally, paving the way for a more equitable and accepting world.

Conclusion

LGBTQ+ inclusion is a nuanced, context-dependent endeavor that requires understanding the impact of various supportive and unsupportive environments. Whether through regulatory frameworks, institutional practices, or cultural shifts, inclusion efforts must address the unique challenges posed by different contexts. Recognising the importance of intersectionality, leadership, and hysteresis, along with the toxic triangle in Turkey, is crucial in creating truly inclusive spaces. The toxic triangle provides a lens for understanding how leadership, vulnerable followers, and an exclusionary environment interlock to impede progress, underscoring the need for institutional change and international support to foster inclusion.

Future research on LGBTQ+ inclusion could benefit from exploring the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ identities across varying cultural, social, and economic contexts. Specifically, studies could examine how overlapping identities – such as race, socioeconomic status, religion, and gender – shape the experiences and challenges of LGBTQ+ individuals in diverse settings. Understanding these intersections can reveal unique forms of discrimination or resilience that arise within specific cultural contexts and provide insights into the varied needs of LGBTQ+ communities worldwide. Research on intersectionality is particularly needed in regions where LGBTQ+ individuals are both legally restricted and socially marginalised, such as in

parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Comparative studies across countries with differing legal frameworks could also show how legislation, social norms, and economic structures influence LGBTQ+ inclusion, offering valuable data on what policies and practices lead to positive outcomes.

Another promising direction is investigating the role of emerging technologies and digital platforms in advancing LGBTQ+ rights and visibility. With the rise of social media, virtual communities, and online advocacy, digital platforms have become powerful tools for LGBTQ+ activism, especially in countries where in-person gatherings and public expression are limited by law. Future studies could focus on how these platforms contribute to social change, foster community support, or increase exposure to inclusive content and how they can be leveraged further to support LGBTQ+ individuals in restrictive environments. Additionally, understanding the impacts of digital inclusion initiatives within workplaces, schools, and other institutions could help organisations design inclusive digital spaces that promote positive interactions and safeguard LGBTQ+ identities. Together, these research directions could deepen our understanding of LGBTQ+ inclusion in complex, digitalised societies and guide policies that support LGBTQ+ rights at both local and global levels.

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History, Society & Culture



The Ferry

by **Leyla Erbil**

Excerpts translated by
Mina Toksöz

'The Ferry' was first published in the 1968 collection of short stories *Gecede* by Leyla Erbil. It has been the focus of much literary attention with Sema Bulutsuz highlighting its Freudian and Kafkaesque themes in *Leyla Erbil'in Yapıtlarında Fantastik Ögeler*, (Phantastic Concepts in Leyla Erbil's Work); in *Leyla Erbil'de Etik ve Estetik* (Ethics and Aesthetics in Leyla Erbil) edited by Süha Oğuzertem, in 2007. Following Erbil's death in 2013, Fatih Altuğ in *Leyla Erbil'in 'Vapur'unun Minor Hareketleri* (Minor Movements in 'The Ferry' by Leyla Erbil) focused on the extensive array of writers such as Samiha Ayverdi (1964), P.G. Inciciyan (1956), Eremya Celebi Kömürcüyan (1952), and Cabir Vada (1943) that Erbil drew on to construct a collective memory of the Bosphorus; this was included in *Putkırıcı Bir Usta Leyla Erbil'in Ardından...* (In Memory of an Expert Iconoclast...) by Kaya Tokmakçioğlu. This translation in turn has drawn from Nermin Menemencioğlu's previous work. 'The Ferry' is one of Erbil's most loved stories: Istanbul University literature students attending her funeral carried paper boats which they put on her coffin.



"The establishment of the Beneficial Society, the Şirket-i Hayriye in 1851 began the urban development of the shores of the Bosphorus.

The idea of the Society was initially conceived by Fuat Pasha and Cevdet Pasha who penned the proposal during a joint visit to the thermal springs of Bursa. This was written in the records of 'Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and his Times'. It is also recorded in the 'Last Grand Viziers of the Ottoman Era' on page 186.

To the 1,500 shares, worth 300 piastres each, another 500 were added for a total initial offer of 2,000 shares.

Of these shares, the first 100 was purchased by the Sultan, another 50 by his Mother. Led by Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşit Pasha, Mehmet Ali Pasha, the Minister of Defence, Fethi Pasha, Commander of the Artillery, Yusuf Kamil Pasha, former Grand Vizier, Mustafa Pasha, Governor of Crete, as well as Zeynep Hanım, daughter of the Governor of Egypt, Mehmet Ali Pasha, and wife of the former Grand Vizir Yusuf Kamil Pasha; together with bankers Abraham, Kevork, Mıgırdıç, Isak, and Miseyani, who bought 20 shares each along with a number of other notables and money-changers who bought between 10 and 20 shares each."

The Bosphorus Speaks by A Jabir Vada

Two unreliable witnesses and I were the only ones who saw the ferry depart from the pier. No one else. That's the truth.

Several days after the ferry had gained its freedom and independence, an old fisherman with watery eyes began to recount how one night in early autumn, when a few days previously we had all watched the migrating birds eddying in the autumn sky, at one o'clock that night, how his row-boat of twenty-two years began to shudder with a deep grinding sound as if to capsize, that he scarcely had time to jump into the water, and as he reached the shore, how at that moment his boat was engulfed by the waters, right there in front of his eyes. This was the fisherman who, before this event, could be seen frequently at the Beşiktaş pier, the fisherman who had a retinue of cats licking the dirt and grease off the crevices of his bare feet, and who tightly clutching a bottle of alcohol would sing in a rasping voice 'The Telegraph Wires'. We were not to go anywhere near him, my mother said...Yes, this fisherman's boat had definitely disappeared. The second witness was a homeless street-kid, of about ten or eleven. He would sneak into the ferry after it was anchored at the pier and had been sleeping there for the past couple of months.

Officially, it was denied the ferry existed. The number of ferries was known. Since 1851 when Şirket'i Hayriye (Istanbul ferryboat company) was established and after the first six had arrived from England, how many more ferries were bought, how many were exchanged, their numbers and names...it was all known. (Cabir Veda even records that the helmsmen of the ferries earlier than No37 had to perch on the steps on either side of the paddle-wheel box to manoeuvre the boat). But it was also true that those of us who lived in Beşiktaş at the time and gathered at the shore, had seen for months, even years, the antics of the ferry and every one of us were witness to numerous events. Over time, the prosecutor who had initiated legal proceedings and the judge



who had dismissed the case also joined us at the pier almost every evening after work to watch surreptitiously from the corner of their eyes the clowning antics of the ferry at the Hayrettin pier in Beşiktaş where it could best be seen. They then fled from the mocking gaze of the people (who appear to understand nothing, know nothing, are easily replaceable, never compensated for their pain, with drooping moustaches, silent, gullible, or so they appeared to the prosecutor and the judge, until they began to understand them and saw the twinkling in their eyes). Sometime later, when we did not know what to make of the disappearance of the prosecutor and the judge, the prosecutor – a small man with an overcoat, felt hat, and an occasional umbrella, reappeared having married Havva, the daughter of the Lezgin baker who lived next door to us. After the ceremony, to which the judge, the court process-servers, the typists, and everyone else who denied the existence of the ferry were invited, we all became uneasy, and some even claimed the prosecutor had chosen Havva because of his interest in the ferry. As for Havva, who was in love with one of the apprentice bakers, a boy of sixteen with thorny hair, she had no idea what to make of her spouse, this little man whose white shirts she washed daily. Us neighbours always suspected something amiss. But even after many years, I still fail to make sense of the whole affair...

...The numbers of those who claimed to have seen the ferry get away increased every day. I give my version of the events knowing that hundreds of people, other than the two – the fisherman and the street-kid - also claim "I saw it too!", and that it is going to be difficult to reach the truth among all these accounts of what happened that night.

Knowing too, that the people who saw the ferry, our people whose bread is stolen from their mouths with a blow on the back of the neck, and who for some reason always, always are left behind, only to be remembered when there is a war, and when there is no war, prepared to do all sorts of things to curry favours to be recognised, and if they live long enough to grow old and lose their mind, can be found in parks exhibiting themselves to little girls and that sort of thing. Yet, knowing all this, and how unjust it would be to take away the memory of the ferry that they clung to for consolation on their last days, I am still going to say, "I know what happened, not you" because I really did see the ferry escape.



The ferry completes its last trip for the day, moors at the pier, ready for its morning journey at 6.30am the next day.

Its fore and aft lights are lit; the broadside lights are dimmed,
There is no one at the paddle-box; the upper decks are deserted,

The seats used by passengers all day, the railings, the stairs, the worn away floors of the first- and second-class saloons are all empty, resting. The life-vests in the ceiling let loose their straps and heave a deep sigh of relief, the captain is back home, sat down to his raki. Has he beaten up his wife and hugged his son? And at that hour, not late into the night, but about 20.00 when a gentle breeze is rippling the waters, my mother, my older sister, and I are out for a walk by the Hayrettin pier. Mother is sitting on a stool, as always, her knitting in her hand, with her back to the sea; she knits cardigans to order for two liras a piece, father is never with us, his letters arrive in bulging envelopes from far-away places, my sister munches on pumpkin seeds and easily finds friends to play with. I look at the sea, the immense, kind-hearted sea. We are on a wooden pier jutting out into the water with row boats, squat fishing boats, barges all around, it is a warm night. On the nights after hot days, mother takes us to the seashore, out of the narrow dark rooms of our house. No 35 Loşbahçe Street, in the district of Abbasağa. We are tenants of Eda Hanım. Eda Hanım is bedridden. Now we are sitting at the pier, gazing at the sea, the stars, and the Maiden's (Leander) Tower and taking the sea-air. "Taking the air is good for children", says mother, "it makes them healthy, makes them sleep well". While mother chatted with a woman sitting next to her, suddenly the sea began to tremble, somewhere nearby there is a tobacco depot (also called the reji building, I think) that empties its sewage here with the waters around the pier the colour of mud, these waters began to churn and foam, when with no one there to loosen the hawser, I saw the ferry leave the landing, turn ahead, turn astern, turn ahead once more, its green and red broadside lights came on, and gained distance, "Look at the ferry, look at the ferry!" I shouted at mother. The waters are muddy here but they were brilliant blue there with white foam glittering in the night, the ship jumped in the air twice and came crashing down hard with the sea erupting, leaned this way and that, looked around and headed towards the Maiden's Tower, then I saw its headlights switch on, "Mother look!" I shouted again, but she, knitting a dark blue cardigan without looking at her needles, tick, tick, tick, kept knitting, saying to the woman next to her that she could finish one cardigan per day if she had the time, showing off her skills, just then someone screamed and jumped into the foaming sea, that must have been the street-kid, that was what I saw and it tallied with him sleeping on the ferry. The ferry now blew single blasts of its whistle, one after another, and mother glanced at it casually saying to me "what is the matter, haven't you seen a ferry before?" Also, the fisherman's boat sank that night.

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How can a ferry get away when it was not manned and without its night-watchman or crew?

After mooring the ferry, the crew would go to Yunus' café in Beşiktaş to play cards. How can a ferry burst its moorings and take off without the captain coming to see what is happening? Where is my boat? What am I now the captain of? Would he not ask, what am I going to do now? Is the captain vital for the boat, or is the boat more important for captains?

The ferry began to shuttle back-and forth between Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point) and the two Kavaklar villages at the Black Sea end of the Bosphorus. Is it not obvious that this boat is missing the usual emotional ties? It did not seem to have the devotion of others of its kind. Number 74 for instance had made its skipper, Captain Şeref, a well-known and loved figure to the Bosphorus folk and carried his coffin to Beykoz when he died... then there was Captain Ahmet who served forty unflagging years on the Galata Bridge to the Prinkipo Islands route, or the captain of the very first side-paddler, who was my uncle, and whose flag-draped coffin was taken from Caddebostan to the Galata Bridge by that ancient ferry. I never rode on a side-paddler since then. Number 72 Üsküdar meanwhile sank in 1958 in the İzmit bay drowning all its passengers on board, then there was Captain Yusuf and my father. Where is my father?

IV

Day and night the shores of the Bosphorus filled with people: children, teen-agers, breast-feeding young mothers, grannies past their prime, hookers from Kadıköy, ladies in full Islamic cover, head-scarves and black overcoats. Jews, Greeks, Armenians, clerks, and office-workers after 18.00, new beer-gardens cropped up along the shore, rowboats and binoculars for rent, trees for climbing for 25 kuruş, two children and one granny crushed in the stampede for vantage points, one dead, three injured.

The people came to watch.

The ferry was motionless on some days, anchored at random places, and depending on the direction of the currents, presenting its flanks or its bows to the crowds, as if it was a revered queen. Sometimes, we did not know why, it would sidle along the shore, we thought this was when it was thinking; it would stop, look around, choose a spot where a dense crowd had gathered, snuggling up, it would whirl around, stand on its bows, lift up its skirts, show its bottom, run its whirring propeller in the air, listen to the screams of the crowd, then toss itself back into the water flat on its belly. At these times, it reminded me of mother losing it when angry with me, to frighten me when I had been naughty. This was one of its tricks we children liked best – the belly hitting the water would give a dense rumble like a primaevial monster with thousands of arms flailing out of its mane...

...The navy fleet pursued the ferry for days, at first beseeching it to "Surrender! Surrender!" with loudspeakers that were heard all over the city. This went on for many nights. Waking from a deep sleep to the sound of "Surrender! Surrender!", us city-folk would know that the ferry had not relented, and would doze off again, happy. And then, as soon as it was morning, we would dash to the shore. "Today the navy will catch the ferry". This rumour spread around the city from mouth to mouth. First one of the warships had tossed ropes, and tried to catch the ferry with hooks and hawsers, but to no avail, the ferry blowing single blasts on its whistle, escaped, stopping now and again, waiting for the ship to come closer, then making noises from its stern, pulamp!

pulamp! and again blowing single blasts, it sped away, not so much to get away from the ship but as if this was its plan for the day; in a defiant manner neither proud or humble, not cowardly or respectful, nor indeed insolent. The navy boat, responding to the shouts from many among us of

Long live the fleet
Long live the fleet,
The fleet, the fleet, the fleet!

seeming to understand that it was about to lose our respect, suddenly abandoned the chase as if awaiting new orders. By that time, the ferry had crept close to the navy boat as if listening to the fleet's wireless and radar, the comings and goings on deck, the admirals as if preparing for a big decision. As for the ferry, orders could be heard issued from inside but no one could be seen, smoke poured out of its chimneys, but there were no more whistle blasts, it steered methodically just beyond Ortaköy and anchored there. It seemed rather quiet, looking at a warship which had parted from the rest of the fleet and was approaching, with something of the quiet concentration of my mother on days when, without customers and no knitting orders, she fed and put us to bed having had no supper herself, put out the lights, and sat at the window, watching the rooftops. When the warship was right up against the ferry, the commander could be heard, warning, "Surrender or you'll be sunk! Raise your flag of surrender, or two minutes from now, you will be sunk!"

Not a sound came from the ferry, not a sound from the yalis, the dogs, the chestnut, mulberry and plane trees, the fountains and palaces, the roses, the waiters, the horses, not a sound from any of us. I grabbed mother's skirts and wailed "mommy!", I did not want them to sink the ferry; "Shut up!" said mother with a whack on my face, and at the same time a piercing scream was heard from the warship: "Fireee!" One second of silence followed...the second during which the marines hesitated to fire on a boat, on its own in the sea, doing no one any harm and moreover, entertaining the poor people of the city. In the end (not having seen the film about the Battleship Potemkin) they did fire. A dense black smoke covered the Bosphorus, we could not see the ferry but when the smoke cleared, we saw the warship; its masts were broken, it was sounding four blasts at regular intervals and sinking slowly into the waves. Right after, our ferry appeared shaking its tail with pride as it sailed back and forth in front of us on the shore, blowing salutes on its whistle until darkness came and we then began to shout,

Long live the ferry
Long live the ferry,
The ferry, the ferry, the ferry!

On our return home, mother gave Eda Hanım the good news that the ferry had not been caught, that we would still be able to watch its antics, and she piled raisins and hazelnuts in front of us to munch on as we sat late into the night talking about the ferry; no one felt like sleeping, mother started to knit a cardigan for me from left-over yarns of every colour, saying that my sister could still manage with her old ones, but I had none that fitted me: "If I have any strength left, I will knit you a waistcoat " she said to Eda Hanım, who asked "where is Hasan Efendi, he hasn't been around for a while?" and mother replied "He writes letters doesn't he?". Winter was coming.

Our interest in the ferry began to fade as time went on. It had no new tricks as it sailed every day on the same routes, blowing whistles and living off its earlier glories...

VI

...Well, when everyone began to find everything ordinary and the ferry no longer interesting, one Sunday, the ferry swinging around on its stern came up to Scutari point.

...Suddenly catching sight of the Hasip Pasha yalı, the ferry advanced in a rage towards Beylerbeyi. The days when Hasip Pasha's daughter, with her little cap on her head, her handmaids Leman and Suzidil at her feet, and Halet Hanım, the daughter of Cemal Efendi, the general manager of 36 farms which the Pasha had bought for a bargain in the province of Rumeli, lived together in this yalı, unfolded like a film before its eyes. Remembering the necklace of the wife of Cemal Efendi, said to be worth twenty-thousand gold pieces, it thought: I've known humans for hundreds of years, known them since 1854, and before that have learnt about them from my ancestors, the freight-boats and the passenger boats with four pairs of oars that ferried the simple folk, among my family there were none of those light row-boats with three, two or even a single pair of oars that the wealthy used.

... It thought I come from a labouring line of boats, earned my keep with honour and my own sweat, my brow is clean, I know about dirty deals, witnessed the historical injustices, but now my patience is exhausted, I am now living with dignity and refusing to serve humans who see that as the natural way of things. I wanted to show them – the humans – that I can be different, that I can defy them, and they react by chasing me, the shores are packed with people who have come to watch me conquer the navy and reject the tasks appointed to me, I have shown that I am the master of my own fate. But after all this, I have only saved myself, shown my superiority, and even behaved badly with clownish acts not suited to my character, here I am throwing myself into the fire for their sake and they find me entertaining, and asking 'how can I stand this loneliness', tossed itself on the waters across to Hünkar. Ah, I have had enough of these Straits, enough of that enormous history, if I had a chance, I would change all of that history, start all over again for humanity, but what ought I to do now? It looked sternly at Sariyer, then pale and thoughtful headed towards Tarabya. Ey Tarabya, Therapia, it said. In the XVII and XVIII centuries only the wealthy people lived here...why?

...And so, to this very day, these shores belong to the rich, as if these people were ships! How can one put up with that having seen all this! I have had enough and want to see, before I die I would like to see so that I can close my eyes when I die, it said and blew the alarm whistle, thrashing about on its belly, beating its head and its rear, when shall I see this, when eh, and beat itself senseless and was for a moment breathless, but then it once again stood erect like a lion. O fires! hey earthquakes! Floods! Storms! I will ask, I will ask you all! Hey imperial cities! Byzantine palaces! sultan's graves! Priests, tombs, mosques, bazaars, churches, cisterns of one thousand and one columns, hippodromes with triumphal monuments erected from 60,000 human skulls, and you pashas Atık Ali Pasha! Cibali! Mehmet Pasha the Marksman! Hafiz Ahmet Pasha! You sultan's mosques with annual endowments of 200 purses of gold! You districts of Kadırga! Zindankapı! Baba Cafer! Unkapanı! You the lighthouse at Ahırkapı! Langa! Gypsies! Kurds! Sabbateans! Georgians! Lezgins! Circasians! Tatars! Albanians hey! and this inscription above the gateway of the house of the Mevlevi:

"Constantine had this tower built in ten-months, by order of Theodosius..."

By whom was it built, hey!

Who were the builders hey! rise up and take it back!

O humans, massacres, bath houses, dervish lodges, Aynalı Pavilion, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, Jewish quarter, Galata, Hasköy, Armenians, hey Bakırköy quarries, stone quarries of the Byzantine era and Ottoman era, hey workmen who built the city walls of Theodosius, the bridges of Murat II, Kot Karabet of Erzincan, Byzantine clock towers of Balıklı, church built by Leon I and expanded and decorated by Justinian, the scene of many historical events, hey! To the workers who built the long and broad high road from the Gate of Adrianople to the sultan's palace, the skulls and bones of those who laboured to take it over the hills, arise ye! Porta Caligaria, Porta Basilica, to Topkapı...

...O, women of the palace arise! ...

...O, you who baked baklava in the palace kitchens on the 15 th night of Ramadan for 10,000 janissaries, ey baklava! O, Marble Kiosque said to have been built by the vizier of the Treasury Abd-us-selam! O, the Balkan wars, Enver Pasha, Mahmut Şevket Pasha, the German trade, Gallipoli, Galicia, Caucasus, Palestine and Iraq, all rise up, unite and take it back!

But, what shall I do with this knowledge, how can I make something of it? (mother held my hand tighter than ever). O, 1914! Starving city of Istanbul, rail-way car scandals, the racketeering war-rich, the peasants! Here, listen to what Mrs Semiha Ayverdi has to say about you:

'1914 war was a truly catastrophic calamity. While at the battle-fronts the innocent Anatolian peasants were cut down like crops in the fields, the enlightened classes with the responsibility to govern in the days to come were also wiped out. More tragic than the downfall of an enormous empire, was this decimation of the elite...'

Hey, come to your senses, stand up, take it back! I've had enough! I am fed up waiting to see before I die, to see the mothers and fathers, the children, the people...

Those were the last words of the ferry to reach us.

VII

The ferry was speeding away, almost flying, as if it was no longer a ferry, and again in the darkness a red line flashed and disappeared, leaving in its wake much hysterical shouting and yelling, wailing children, bellowing men and screaming women. We heard these sounds now and again, then another flash of the red line, then again darkness and screaming, which we joined without knowing what it was about.

These were the voices of all the people packed on both shores of the Bosphorus, the echoes of our screams piercing the pitch-black darkness that descended on the Bosphorus. The people had reached, in other words, we had reached a state of great excitement without knowing why, even if the ferry was up to no good, we felt overjoyed. Why did we love the ferry? Why did we trust it? Did we believe that it loved us and was fighting for us? This lasted until the morning, we ran around madly having a great time, hugging and kissing people we did not know, singing marching songs. Towards morning when we began to distinguish each other in the light of a pale misty sun, we saw the ferry rounding the Leander's Tower heading towards Kavaklar, giving frequent salutes to people on the shore and wildly singing folk and marching songs as it advanced.

...That morning, we all sang together; and joined the ferry whirling and dancing along with the pintail ducks, cormorants, hermit crabs, scallops, kingfishers, seagulls, coots, lesser shearwaters, goldfinches, mina birds, eels, and sea-moss that had clambered

on its decks and sails. We were overjoyed, and oblivious to our exhaustion and sleeplessness, we danced with the ferry as if celebrating a long-forbidden, longed for holiday over the centuries. Then suddenly, not knowing why, we began to flee. Men were approaching, dispersing the crowds, wounding, killing and arresting hundreds of people, why I never understood. Grabbing me and my sister, mother made us run back home, we ran breathlessly up the hill, Havva and the prosecutor just ahead of us. Mother told Eda Hanım that the yalis along the shore had been burnt down, the kiosques, the summer residences razed to the ground, that many had died, that the government held the people responsible, but it could only be the ferry mother said, 'I never saw anyone even touch a doorknob', she said in a voice hoarse with defiance and fear. 'Where is Hasan efendi, he is nowhere to be seen', Eda Hanım said, and mother replied, 'He should be back soon one of these days.' But no one saw the ferry after that day. And father never returned to us.

VIII

Did the ferry disappear because it thought it had changed nothing by its antics, changed nothing in the basic lives of people, merely entertained, distracted, and even fooled them not to rise up and rebel but to submit to their fate, because it had failed to rally the people to its cause, and became depressed, lonely, and hopeless?

Or did the ferry, knowing there was no point in pessimism, embark upon another journey to enlighten people in other lands, with its eyes welling up with tears of happiness knowing that in the middle of the night we echoed its' screams and shouts?

Does it know that to this day we wake up having heard the ferry's whistle in our sleep?...

A Room of One's Own (Kendine Ait Bir Oda)



Introduction by **Esra Okyay**
Founder of KABO

Translator Mina Toksöz

A Room of One's Own (**KABO**) is a contemporary art initiative named after Virginia Woolf's book of the same name* and has been organizing exhibitions, talks and screenings in Turkey since 2015 in line with the aims and objectives of its founder Esra Okyay to create a "unique meeting place". It aims to increase the visibility of the creative potential of the local, to strengthen the intergenerational cooperation of artists, and to open up an inclusive space for learning and production practices.

With this understanding, KABO develops projects that bring together artists and art students, academics and independent cultural actors, and prioritizes creating the basis for cooperation between art students and newly graduated artists on the basis of sharing mutual experiences.

With the participation of Hande Bozbıyık since 2022, KABO programs have been led by a team of two. In our last two projects, we worked together with Gülay Vardar.

*Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* for women; we have adopted the call to earn money for creative works and have a room of your own as the name of the initiative in the context of the relationship between creativity and space.

Motivation

A Room of One's Own is an independent non-commercial organization that believes in the power of art to bring people together. With this motivation, it implements programs in which young and experienced artists and actors from different fields come together in different spaces and develop creative experiences through art.

Ongoing and past Events

KABO is working to establish a permanent exhibition area at the Izmir ferry pier, supported by the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality. At the Karşıyaka Ferry pier, which was selected as a pilot, the project called **Pier Exhibitions** includes five exhibition programs. Architect Stephanie Gallia is working on the design of the exhibition space. Thus, a special display system consisting of three modular profiles has been created, which preserves the features of the pier structures. KABO finds the interaction between the city-passenger-artist very important in the work it carries out with artists and designers from different disciplines within the scope of public space pier exhibitions.

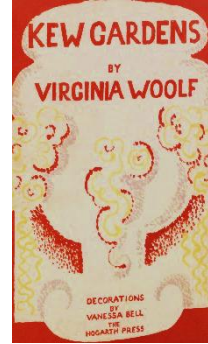
The **Together (Birlikte)** project (2022-2023) was a two-year program that brought together 20 art students from Izmir and Şırnak, including workshops under the mentorship of experienced artists. The project, which took place online, consisted of two phases. The first semester started with online meetings of 20 students living 1,600 km away from each other investigating what could be done 'together'. It lasted nine months with workshops consisting of groups whose parameters were determined by themselves, and online workshops led by experienced artists Vahap Avşar, Tufan Baltalar and Levent Ayata. The first physical encounter between the students, their teachers and the experienced artists who conducted the workshop took place in Izmir in February 2023. The group, who spent ten days together in Izmir, worked on the installation of the exhibition of the project. In the second period, similar workshops continued drawing on the lessons of the previous ones, and the project was completed with the second exhibition held in Şırnak at the end of 2023. The whole team, students, and the experienced artists Erkan Özgen, Nadan Özcan and Mehtap Baydu, came together in Şırnak, to construct the exhibition during the time they spent together. As the output of the project, a book containing the students' works was designed and its digital version was shared. You can find the link to this book below.

The **Intergenerational** event consisted of two simultaneous exhibitions held in 2021 with the participation of 11 experienced artists from the first-generation graduates of Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Fine Arts and 30 young artists who are current students at the same school. This constituted an important intergenerational transfer of knowledge and experience between the first art graduates who came together at this event after 30 years and the young artists who were the project assistants. The nostalgia in the exhibition by the experienced artists was not only about the past, and the exhibition, in which 30 young artists participated, took place in different venues in

the same location on the top of the hill. Mürüvvet Türkyılmaz, one of the experienced generation of artists, mentored the exhibition of the young artists.

Future Projects

The **Interdisciplinary Workshops** project, which is planned for 2025, includes three different workshop programs to be carried out by mentors from different disciplines. It consists of joint-meetings that will be held by mentors from their own fields and with the participation of art students. The program, which will focus on nature and the environment and organic-traditional life research, will proceed through the literature channel in the first of the workshops where participants and mentors from the fields of literature, architecture, and biology will come together with art students. In the study, student participants from the field of literature and art will trace the plants in Virginia Woolf's books, and the output of the workshops will consist of their illustrations which will form the pages of the book.



The text of the study, which will be mentored by Mine Özyurt Kılıç, a professor of English Language and Literature at the Social Sciences University of Ankara, is provided below.

Project Title: *A Page of One's Own: Artistic Publishing in Virginia Woolf's 'Kew Gardens' and the Exploration of the Slow with Hogarth's Snail*

"I want to think quietly, calmly, spaciouly, never to be interrupted, never to have to rise from my chair, to slip easily from one thing to another, without any sense of hostility, or obstacle. I want to sink deeper and deeper away from the surface, with hard separate facts."

Virginia Woolf, *The Mark on the Wall* (1917)

This project consists of five sessions that aim to examine in depth the aesthetic understandings of the Bloomsbury Group and representatives of Omega Workshops, consisting of artists and writers who are pioneers of modernism such as Virginia Woolf and her husband Leonard Woolf, her sister Vanessa Bell, and their friends Clive Bell and Duncan Grant. A group of 12 participants consisting of literary scholars, curators and artists will come together at this event to read and examine the first stories published by Virginia Woolf in 1917 with her husband Leonard Woolf on the dining table in their home, discover the parallels between the Hogarth Press's understanding of publishing with the ideas she included in her stories and prose, and practise Woolf-style writing, book design and publishing.

These meetings, which will start in the autumn of 2024, will be held through online education methods with face-to-face interaction taking place at the stage of printing and exhibition of the books.

Seminar and Workshop Series Content:

1. Modernist Literature and Art
2. Bloomsbury Group and Omega Workshops
3. Hogarth Press and its Approach to Publishing
4. Reading Woolf's Works and Woolf-Style Writing Workshop
5. Woolf-Style Book Illustration, Cover Design and Printing Workshop

Purpose of the Project and **Expected Impact:** This seminar and workshop series aims to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on the place and effect of artistic production in the process of introducing the reader to the writings of Virginia Woolf, one of the founders of Modernist literature. The workshop will cover the field of literature, publishing and art, and explore literary and artistic practices resulting from this thinking process. These activities, driven by the creativity of the participants, will expand their cultural and artistic perspectives and bring an innovative angle to the production processes. This process will cover all stages from initial conception to writing, from drafting to preparation for printing, and will include important elements such as thinking about the accompanying images and determining the form that will reach the reader.

This event will be led by Prof. Dr Mine Özyurt Kılıç, a member of the board of directors of the International Virginia Woolf Society. In addition, it will be enriched with the valuable contributions of Esra Okyay, an artist, educator and curator who founded the 'A Room of One's Own' art platform inspired by Virginia Woolf's book *A Room of One's Own*, artist Can Akgümüş, who produces and curates Virginia Woolf-inspired art, and Ezgi Yıldız, the founding director of Galeri Kairos, which hosts these exhibitions. This series of events is based on Özyurt Kılıç's 2017 exhibition of a selection of Hogarth Press originals from the Harvard University Houghton Library's rare books archive, a seminar on these books, and *A Press of One's Own: Celebrating 100 Years of Hogarth Press*, which includes two workshops where the reprints were made. (A Printing Press of One's Own: 100 Years of Hogarth Publishing). Located at the intersection of creative and critical reading, creative writing, artistic practices, exhibition curation, book design and production, and publishing, this seminar and workshop series aims to support its participants and viewers in the production of original works.

A PRESS OF ONE'S OWN
Celebrating 100 Years of
VIRGINIA and LEONARD WOOLF's
HOGARTH PRESS

For detailed information, please visit the event website:

<https://hogarthpress100.wordpress.com/>

To access the related article in Turkish:

<https://nesirdergisi.com/index.php/nesir/article/view/123/94>

KABO Instagram account: [@kendineait1oda](https://www.instagram.com/kendineait1oda).

Together Project Instagram account: [@kabo_birlikte](https://www.instagram.com/kabo_birlikte)

Together Project Book:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14M7IZDHTZdxq8aSCDwfUXwOjgxGGq4Qp/view>

KABO on YouTube: <https://youtube.com/@kendineaitbiroda?si=LeYEaSohWH-KEomQ>

KABO Spotify channel:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4ru3qCt8tMYidFOOcGrZcl?si=77PHmqibRXKBoqi2wOpC-w>

KABO Blog: <https://medium.com/@kendineait1oda>

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 Professor Clement Dodd. If you might be able to write this feature for *TAS Review* please contact the Co-Editor.



“Sweets to the Sweet”:

Food Culture and Reciprocity in Eighteenth Century Istanbul

by Gemma Masson

Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy

“Tatlı yiyelim, tatlı konuşalım”

(“Let's eat sweet, let's speak sweet”.)

TRADITIONAL TURKISH SAYING



The above phrase is a traditional Turkish saying utilised when people wish to sit together and discuss pleasant things which will traditionally be accompanied by eating sweets. Traditions of Turkish, and indeed pan-Mediterranean hospitality put great meaning and significance on sharing a table even if it is just something as simple as drinking a cup of coffee in the company of another person. In this paper firstly I want to lay a groundwork by briefly outlining some definitions and ideas of the new food history and then getting into the linguistic and cultural origins of the baklava in question. This will segue into a discussion of the role of food in celebration before examining a specific case study of the Ottoman Janissary Corps in the context of the Eighteenth Century covering their relationship with the Sultanate at this time before addressing the Ramadan “Baklava Event” and its implications.

Definitions

Anyone who has worked on any aspect of imperial and/or global history is very familiar with the ideas of movement, not only of basic level trade goods and money but peoples and ideas, religions and recipes. The rise of the New Food History covers this culinary diaspora and more often making manifest connections or parts of the chain which are often overlooked. It is the way of global history, for example to connect the African Slave kidnapped from the Ivory Coast to the sugar cane plantation of the New World to the sugar lumps which rot the teeth of a builder in the London as he knocks back a cup of the famous 'builder's tea', ergo we have a foundational book of the new food history, published in 1985. Anthropologist Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* covers the development of the industry as a result of the rise of the slave trade.¹ Such connections hopefully help to dispel the idea that food history is not 'proper' history worthy of a historian's time. That said this interaction of “mainstream” World History and Food History is a fairly recent phenomenon coming about in the second half of the Twentieth Century, and this idea of cultural exchange and interaction in the culinary arena is one I shall return to a little later when I discuss some theory particularly relevant to my case study. What the new food history comes

¹ Rick Warner, 'The Rise of the New Food History', *World History Connected*, Vol 12, 3.
<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/12.3/warner.html>

down to is that studying food and eating patterns is a great way to teach world history and get at a shared human experience. Our diets have developed over time with new foods and cooking methods coming in from all over the world and this is a constant evolution of discovering and adopting new tastes and ideas and dishes. There is also a large part played by the symbolic significance of certain foods and methods of preparing and consuming them. Eating is a shared human experience, but it also creates and defines social status whether we want it to or not.²

Many of us are familiar with the concept of 'the language of flowers', in a very similar way, food has its own language as well. The title of my paper and the Turkish proverb I opened with refers to the idea of sweet foods to sweet people, we give sweets to children at Easter and our lovers on Valentines Day, also the proverb makes the more evident connection of the mouth. If you eat something sweet then sweet and pleasant words will come from your mouth. Associating sweetness with positive emotions can be traced back almost to the beginnings of human history with the biblical lands of milk and honey and the rivers of honey in the Koran.³ Richard Tapper and Sami Zubaida make reference to "the aesthetics of taste" as something liable to changes in fashion as much as dress styles or anything else.⁴ The concept of the type of foods you eat impacting your personality and body is not a new thing. Part of the development of food through time has been evolutions in the meaning of eating, in earliest times when natural remedies were the only medicines available foods had great power, with the Greek physician Galen recommended types of food combination which may seem unscientific to the modern mind, for example pastries made with flour and butter would be damaging if consumed without honey.⁵ In the early Islamic world cooking writing was classified among the sciences as a type of alchemy,⁶ while Ancient Chinese sources show us a very early understanding of sugar as a preservative with the legends of the mellified man, a type of mummy preserved in honey and famed for its medical and magical healing properties. There is a very human tendency to enjoy and utilise sweet things throughout history with Felipe Armesto arguing that "Cane sugar is perhaps the first food to have conquered unaccustomed markets by the power of PR." and there is no denying such sugar played a key role in the Eighteenth Century 'hot drinks revolution.'⁷ Suffice to say that that food is a very significant aspect of social and cultural history which is really now starting to come into its own.

Now let's define the specifics of what I'm discussing today. I shall begin with examining some linguistic definitions.

The Latinized Redhouse Turkish dictionary gives the following

- **baklava**: sweet pastry generally cut into diamond shaped pieces
- **alayı**: *Ott hist*: a festivity held in the Sultan's palace during Ramadan, at which balava was distributed to the Janissaries
- **biçimi**: diamond-shaped, rhombus shaped

2 Richard Tapper & Sami Zubaida, 'Introduction', *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East*, ed. Tapper & Zubaida, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks), 2006, p.11

3 Mary Işin, 'Celebrating with Sweets in Ottoman Turkey', *Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2011*, p. 151

4 Richard Tapper & Sami Zubaida, 'Introduction', *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East*, ed. Tapper & Zubaida, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks), 2006, p.11

5 Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Food: A History*, (London: Macmillan, 2001) p. 39

6 *Ibid*, p. 135

7 *Ibid*, p. 205

- **börek (yanında)**: very easy (in comparison with)
- **dilimi** diamonds-shaped, rhombus shaped

The Arabic Redhouse gives us: **TT 1.** A kind of sweet pastry, generally divided into lozenge-shaped sections. **2.** A rhombus or rhomboid a. +adv. Subdivided into lozenge-shaped parallelograms

The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Arabic favours the definition:

baklava: a kind of Turkish delight, pastry made of puff paste with honey and almonds or pistachios.

In so far as cultural implications of language go it is worth noting that both of these dictionaries, while excellent, originated with European linguists interested in 'The Orient', the British Sir James Redhouse during the Nineteenth Century and the German Hans Wehr in the early Twentieth Century.

There are three main threads of argument for the pre-Ottoman origins of baklava, the first being the penchant for layered breads among the Nomadic Turks of Central Asia, which Charles Perry has addressed claiming that these Turks were making layered dough products as early as the Eleventh Century which, he claims supports the argument for a Turkish origin. Being nomadic tribes without ovens they were unable to make the thick loaves settled peoples did and found it necessary to create variety in the thickness of their breads.⁸ This creation of something good (maybe even better) than what is had by arguably more advanced societies is a phenomenon Ian Morris touches upon in his book 'Why The West Rules for Now' calling it "The Law of Advantages Backwards."⁹ Perry also debunks the claim of Speros Vryonis that 'Another Byzantine favourite was the so-called kopte or *kopton* (*koptoplakous*), which was the same as the Turkish baklava.' By following Vryonis' sources he find a description of a Creten sweet called *gastris* or *gastron* which is made with nuts and honey but no dough. He states that *koptoplakous* means literally 'cake made of *kopte*' which is pounded sesame and was a very exact name for *gastris*. He argues the latter was a sweetmeat and not a pastry and hence has no connection to baklava.¹⁰ He goes into further linguistic analysis with the word *yubqa* which is the Ancient Turkish form of *yufka* meaning 'thin, frail' and specially refers to thin flat breads.¹¹ Incidentally this word, *yufka* is one I find used in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman sources.

The second origin claim is the Roman placenta cake¹², a dish comprised of many layers of dough interspersed with cheese and honey, flavoured with bay leaves then covered in honey and baked, its name derives from the Greek term "πλακοῦς", gen. "πλακοῦντος" (*plakous*) for thin or layered flat-breads and it has been argued that it came to the Turks by way of Byzantium as the 'Rome of the East'. This is a highly plausible line of argument considering the Ottoman system of adopting the cultural practices of the lands it conquered as well as a deep desire to be viewed as the rightful inheritors of the Roman Empire by right of conquest. This is an image the Ottomans

8 Charles Perry, 'The Taste for Layered Bread among the Nomadic Turks and the Central Asian Origins of Baklava' in ed. Tapper & Zubaida, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks), 2006, p. 87

9 Ian Morris, *Why The West Rules for Now: The Patterns of History and What They Reveal About the Future*, (Profile: London, 2010)

10 Perry, 'The Taste for Layered Bread' in ed. Tapper & Zubaida, (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks), 2006, p. 88

11 *Ibid*, p.90

12 Patrick Faas, *Around the Roman Table: Food and Feasting in Ancient Rome*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) p.185

worked very hard to cultivate. Another argument giving credence to the idea that the dish came by way of Byzantium is that placenta cake survives in the form of the Romanian plăcintă cake to this day. The name of the dough φύλλο 'filo' is also Greek in origin meaning 'leaf'. The third major claim for the origins of modern baklava is that it derives from a Persian sweet almond paste (like the aforementioned Greek *gastris*) wrapped in pastry and covered in syrup, this is called *lauzinaq* by the Abbasid compiler Muhammed bin Hasan Al-Baghdadi and comes from *Kitab al-Tabikh* (Book of Dishes) a collection written in 1226 based on Ninth Century Persian recipes. Gil Marks further argues the Persian origin by claiming that the name probably derived from the Farsi word *balg/barg* meaning 'leaf' and the Persian suffix *-va* meaning of Persian origin.¹³ The Oxford Companion to Food puts most of its discussion under the entry for 'filo' and touches upon the idea of the Turkish Nomadic dishes combined with "the usual Persian pastry filling of nuts", further claiming that if this is the case then baklava pre-dates filo and was probably an innovation of the Ottoman Sultan's kitchens in Topkapı Palace in Istanbul.¹⁴ Personally I feel that there is a tendency on the part of Western scholars especially to linguistically and culturally trace as many things as possible back to Greek and/or Roman origins while Eastern scholars like to find Arabic and Persian roots. That is not to say that either group are incorrect, we know from global history that parallel developments in often unconnected cultures do occur and we may well be looking at once such phenomenon.

Cultural Intimacy

If we dispense of the idea of 'food nationalism' in history and focus on interactions and shared experiences we are left with what Michael Herzfeld calls "Cultural Intimacy" which he classifies partly as "...the desire for control over the external images of a national culture..."¹⁵ The idea of cultural intimacy links national identity with dispersed cultural practices and modalities of enjoyment and Leonidas Karakatsanis examines this concept in his new book on Turkish-Greek relations and has also addressed it in terms of baklava in his article, *Whose is the Baklava?* in which he discusses many of the shared cultural factors between Greece and Turkey such as baklava, and aniseed-based alcoholic drinks such as *rakı* in Turkey and *ouzo* in Greece. This enjoyment of similar foods and customs can help bridge the gap and, he hopes, assist rapprochement between these old enemies. Both languages also have the word *kéfi* or *keyif* which is not literally translatable into Western European languages but which expresses the process of reaching enjoyment during an evening with friends, music and alcohol.¹⁶ Karakatsanis aims to explain what happens when two politically divided entities have these cultural practices and enjoyments in common and he offers the name of *cultural extimacy* to define, as he puts it, "the dynamics of a similar enjoyment that is marked by the separation of a hyphen (as in *Greek-Turkish*)"¹⁷ and this will be his next work.

13 Gil Marks, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*, (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010) p. 151

14 Tom Jaine (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Food*, 3rd Ed. (OUP: Oxford, 2014) p. 991

15 Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*, (London: Routledge, 1997) p. ix

16 Leonidas Karakatsanis, 'Whose is the baklava? Politics of reconciliation and cultural extimacy', *Heritage Turkey*, British Institute at Ankara, Vol. 4, 2014, pp. 10-11

17 Karakatsanis, 'Whose is the baklava?', p. 11

Food in Hospitality & Celebration

Sweets are a large part of celebrations and festivities the world over with a lot of traditional sweets for certain festivals, Christmas Pudding and Chocolate Eggs at Easter to name but two very prevalent in our culture. So I just want to give a general overview of sweets in Turkish festivities before I get onto my specific broader case study. In Turkey there is a light wafer dessert served during Ramadan called *güllaç*. When I ate it in Istanbul it was served with milk/rose-water and pomegranate seeds and the lightness of this sweet is very clever as it is designed to be eaten during Ramadan at the end of a day of tradition fasting, so it is not too heavy on the stomach. Historically *güllaç* was indispensable at festivities being made to celebrate the conquest of Rhodes in 1522 and at the circumcision banquet held for the sons of Sultan Süleyman in 1539 (one of 58 types of puddings and sweets served on that occasion). Turkish sweets are also a prevalent topic in travel writings. *Güllaç* appears in the famous memoir of the Seventeenth Century traveller Evliya Çelebi who described how thousand-layer *güllaç* was cooked in Belgrade for weddings and circumcisions.¹⁸ Another famous Turkish seasonal pudding is *aşure*, my friend calls it 'Noah's Pudding' as the Turkish origin story for this dish is that when the flood waters began to recede this was the final dish made on board the ark with the final remains of the food supplies, hence the random combination of ingredients including grains, pulses and dried fruits. The boiled wheat is not necessarily biblical canon but has a strong association with harvest and fertility and has endured on that basis. In Ottoman times the making of this dish during Muharrem was thought to bring good fortune to the household. *Aşure* also plays an important role in the Bektaşî religion to which the janissaries belonged. In the main lodge in the village of Hacıbektaş a large black cauldron used to cook this dish is held as sacred. Here the cooking begins on the night of the Ninth of Muharrem and each family brings a contribution to the pot making it a communal affair.¹⁹ Cauldrons also play a significant role in the history of the janissaries as they would famously often overturn their cauldrons in the barracks and refuse the rations provided by the state as a form of protest. Mary Işin argues that the symbolic importance of sweet pastries and sweetmeats in Ottoman culture and earlier Asian societies has its roots in ancient ideas of fertility and rebirth.

Earlier I referenced habits of Turkish hospitality, which are a significant part of the culture and sweets also play a significant role here, both historically and now. There are traditions of taking seasonal sweets to your neighbours during festivals, also rites of passage are often marked by sweets with sherbet being the traditional way to announce the birth of a child along with a myriad of sweets associate with the circumcision of a boy child, engagements, weddings and the 'soul helva' made upon an occasion of death. In Ottoman times a special helva made with clarified butter, flour and sugar called *gazılar helvası* (warriors' helva) was made in memory of soldiers killed in action.²⁰ Much of the information we have on sweets as domestic hospitality comes from the previously mentioned travel literature when Europeans would go to great lengths to describe every detail they could of their experiences. One such traveller was the young Irish aristocrat Lord Charlemont who sailed from Malta to Istanbul in a captured French warship which he leased in June 1749. He recounts

18 Mary Işin, *Sherbet & Spice: The Complete Story of Turkish Sweets and Desserts*, (I. B. Tauris: London, 2013) pp. 172-173

19 *Ibid*, pp. 207-208

20 Işin, 'Celebrating with Sweets in Ottoman Turkey', pp. 151-156

being hosted by the minister of the interior Nailî Efendi who took a shine to the young man and treated him to the full extent of Turkish hospitality.

There is one other domestic hospitable activity traditional to Turkey that revolves around sweets and that is helva parties. Called *helva sohbeti* or 'helva conversations' which were traditionally held on long winter nights and is a custom prevalent at every level of society from the palace to most provincial village. Central to these small intimate gatherings was the conversation with the sweets being the main source of refreshment on offer, again connecting the eating of sweets with pleasant conversation. Entertainment varied from reciting poetry, singing folk songs, telling stories and jokes and playing party games. Helva was also key with the favourite variety being *keten helva*, or *pişmaniye*, the preparation of which could comprise of some of the party fun. This was something not unlike the taffy-pulling parties traditional to Wales, Canada and the US. In times of peace soldiers would often hold these parties and Evliya Çelebi tells of officers guarding Baghdad castle in the seventeenth century inviting the city magnates to helva parties on the battlements. Such gatherings lost their appeal in Istanbul with the growing fashion for European entertainments, but in provincial areas survived until very recently.²¹

To talk a little bit about the main sweet here, baklava. There was once a common expression in Turkey, "I'm not rich enough to have baklava." Truly it was originally the preserve of the upper classes as it was expensive to make and took great skill, most domestic homes of the Middle East did not have the correct type of ovens to cook it in and so it was primarily made by professional bakers and until the nineteenth century was not easily affordable to the middle or working classes.²² Owing to this venerable status in Turkish culture the giving of baklava as a gift seems to be the highest honour and compliment it is possible to pay someone. When a child correctly memorised a *surah* of the Koran for the first time the event was commemorated by a gift of baklava to the school teacher. The Turkish novelist Aziz Nesin remembers his mother's shame when she could not afford to make baklava for his teacher and instead had to send *börek*.²³ So baklava symbolises respect for a job well done and is a gift that honours both giver and receiver as it is a mark of status to be able to afford to give it as a gift. This status-symbol sweet was also key to celebrations and state occasions such as royal weddings, circumcisions and religious feasts. The skill of making such a fine sweet lay largely in the rolling of the *yufka*, pastry to be as thin as paper, without breaking it. In many Turkish towns and cities the local *yufkacı* (yufka maker) is relied upon for this where the pastry is made fresh every day. Another contributing factor to the elite and sacred status of this dish was the luxury of its ingredients, great amounts of honey, sugar, nuts and butter which the average family could only afford on special occasions. It has attained this almost fairy-tale status as the lightness of expertly made baklava was poetically expressed by James Stanislaus Bell who described baklava he ate in Sinop on the Black Sea in 1839 as being "butterfly-things of pastry, which one might blow away, but for the honey their wings are clogged with".²⁴

21 *Ibid*, pp. 143-147

22 Marks, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Food*, p. 151

23 Işin, 'Celebrating with Sweets in Ottoman Turkey', pp. 153-154

24 Işin, *Sherbet & Spice*, pp. 178-184

Janissaries, The Sultanate & baklava alayı



Now I come to Part Three where I will aim to give a brief context of the janissaries, their chronology and relations with the sultans during the Eighteenth Century before describing the 'baklava event' of Ramadan and the connotations thereof. The word janissary is a Westernised version of the Turkish form '*yeniçeri*' which is a compound word '*yeni*' meaning 'new' and '*çeri*' meaning 'corps or regiment'. This is a name they were given when the corps was first formed, and it just seems to have stuck. Like most words the meaning changed down the centuries until we get to Sir James Redhouse's Turkish lexicon created in the Nineteenth Century which defines them as:

yeniçeri: 1. *Ott hist.* Janissary. 2. swashbuckler, bully.

Also with the adjectival suffix making a meaning literally 'like a janissary':

yeniçerilik: 1. quality and functions of a Janissary. 2. blustering disturbance of the peace.²⁵

This negative perspective of the janissary corps and allegations of their corruption are the main focus of my thesis research, and I choose to examine the Eighteenth Century in Istanbul as this is the period and the place in which signs of janissary corruption allegedly peak according to traditional historiography. My personal views on this are that because janissary identity became so diversified in the Eighteenth Century owing to changes in recruiting practices as well as less warfare and thus janissaries adopting auxiliary trades, this homogeneous classification of the corps and their actions during this period cannot hope to be accurate. Baki Tezcan in his book *The Second Ottoman Empire* charts what he calls 'the age of the janissaries' as occurring in the eighteenth century as a consequence of seventeenth century developments and he speaks about an 'institutional transformation' taking place in the corps at this time while I believe it is more accurate to speak about "institutional fragmentation" owing to (borrowing from Linda Colley) the number of "hats" many janissaries wore during this period we must view them as a collection of individuals with some shared interest but unlike the earlier centuries not every aspect of these men's lives was dependent upon or dictated by their membership in the janissary corps.

Historically the sultan was the be all and end all of a janissary's life and serving him was an honour. But by the eighteenth century things had changed a little and a common turning point in janissary-sultan relations is often cited as the regicide of Osman II in 1622. His execution and the re-enthronement of Mustafa I portray the janissaries as political actors with the power to influence great change and while the dethronement and enthronement of sultans is often held as a marker of janissary corruption, as it was their place to be unerringly loyal to the sultan I believe that in their own way the janissaries who acted in this manner viewed themselves as being loyal to the sultanate. That is the position of sultan, and they saw it as their duty to ensure the throne was filled by a worthy ruler. Additionally none of the rulers the janissaries installed were technically illegal all being legitimate males of the House of Osman. Since the abolition of succession by fratricide in the reign of Süleyman the Lawgiver there was always a legitimate alternative ruler waiting in the wings. During the

²⁵ Sir James Redhouse, *Turkish/Ottoman-English Dictionary*, (Istanbul: 1999) p. 1253

eighteenth century even when a sultan was deposed, he was not killed, Ahmed III died in Topkapı Palace after six years of confinement following the loss of his throne. So, the janissaries were not violent for the sake of being violent towards the person of the sultans at this time and I think this is an indicator of how well they were learning to play the political game.

The Eighteenth Century did see several uprisings often attributed to the janissaries the two largest being the Edirne Event of 1703 and the Patrona Halil uprising of 1730. However, work on the Edirne uprising by Rifa'at Abou El-Haj suggests that this uprising was initiated not by janissaries but by armourers and that janissaries joined in later in solidarity with their fellow soldiers. Patrona Halil was the instigator of the 1730 uprising and became a janissary himself by unconventional means. It is also telling that many of his followers, while janissaries were also largely Albanian, so it is possible we are looking at an Albanian uprising many of the participants of which happened to be janissaries and then their fellows joined in the spirit of solidarity. This *esprit de corps* was very deeply entrenched in the janissary psyche with the regiments being called *ocak* meaning hearth or home giving additional intimacy to the situation.

So, to get onto some specific interactions, namely the baklava event during the eighteenth century. This occurred annually on the fifteenth day of Ramadan and the procession, which was instituted towards the end of the sixteenth century. Hundreds of trays of baklava were cooked in the palace kitchens, one tray for every ten janissaries, the trays were wrapped in cloth to protect them from dust and arrayed in the Second Court of the palace. The first tray was presented to the Sultan in his capacity as honorary member of the First Janissary Company. After that two janissaries from each squad would come and claim a tray which they carried suspended on a pole. When all trays were collected the janissaries were led out in a great procession with their standard bearers and officers to their barracks and the following day the copper trays and cloths were returned to the palace.²⁶ Rumour has it that in later years when the janissaries were feeling insolent, they would refuse to return the trays and cloths claiming they had eaten those too!²⁷

There is some archival evidence which may be interpreted to support this. A document from 1789 (1204) references 300 baklava trays being “lost” (*zayi olduğundan*) and calling for them to be replaced.²⁸ It is possible these were lost having been taken by the janissaries, but it is not clear, This ambiguity of language in primary sources is something I've come across before and so it leaves janissary action open to biased interpretation. For example, one document I found was a complaint from some priests in Istanbul claiming that janissaries had been causing them trouble during their prayer times. But the word used in the document was only *rencide* which means to annoy or vex so we can't tell if the abuse was simply verbal or if there was a physical aspect, or some vandalism. It is just not specified. Another document from 1768 (1182) is an expenses payment register for the repair of baklava trays among other kitchenware.²⁹ Aside from demonstrating great thrift in getting wares repaired again the neutrality of the language makes it hard to understand what has happened to make them need repair: are they just old? Did the janissaries damage them during the ceremony? Was

26 Işin, *Sherbet & Spice*, p. 185

27 İlber Ortaylı, 'baklava alayı', *İstanbul ansiklopedisi: dünden bugüne*, Vol. 2. (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı'nin Ortak Yayınıdır. 1993) p. 5

28 BOA, CSM, 126, 6332, 25/Z/1204

29 BOA, CSM, 115, 5771, 25/Za/1182

it something else entirely?

The majority of archival evidence referencing the baklava event and the majority are requests for firewood to be provided for the imperial kitchens in order to make this sweet. The standard amount seems to be 25 çeki (1 çeki = 25 kg) so 625 kg.³⁰ A couple more interesting factors come out of the archives such as one document which states that the baklava ceremony is to be performed on a Monday with Tuesday being the day salaries are to be paid.³¹ This document is dated 1788 (1204), and, coming to the end of the century when allegedly the janissary reputation was suffering, it is interesting that they seem to be being manipulated into going through the public ceremony and playing their part before they get their salary so there is almost an undercurrent of trying to keep up appearances. It is possible that there is a fear that men in the middle of a holiday season upon receiving their salaries would immediately go out drinking and celebrating and they wanted the janissaries to be presentable for the procession.

So, the continuation of this 'gift' from the sultans even through a period of alleged corruption on the part of the corps speaks to a desire to maintain the status quo in so far as it would be possible and also the hope for reconciliation. The baklava was as much a symbol as the janissary cauldrons were that all things for the janissaries came from the sultan, including their sustenance. Whether rebelliously minded janissaries would still accept these as their right or supposed compensation for ills done to them it seems the process still continued. However, there was a two-way element to this process, the sultan gifted baklava and the janissaries, at Ramazan and allegedly ulufe days, responded with boiled akide sweets gifted to sultan and ministers as a sign of loyalty.

Conclusions

This brings me to my conclusion or at least my current thoughts on this topic at this stage of my research. What does all of this tell us and why is it useful? Well, aside from shedding light on the cultural history of food in the Ottoman empire we can also see the symbolic significance of certain foods in certain situations and how they have their own language of which we may interpret the subtext to gain a deeper understanding of what was going on at that time. The ideas of cultural intimacy and extimacy are very useful when considering, not only international relations but also interactions between communities in an entity such as empire which is, by its very nature a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-confessional construct. So, we may look not only at the social status of baklava and what it meant to the janissaries to have it gifted to them but also the inherent 'Turkishness' or 'Ottomanness' of the dish, a symbol of janissary integration and acceptance into the wider empire perhaps? When we remember that many of the recruits came from very far afield in the empire and were of many different ethnicities the baklava gift can be seen as a uniting factor and a gesture of solidarity. Another point which is interesting is the continuation of this practice which occurred without fail right up until the dissolution of the janissaries in 1826, indeed the final baklava procession took place only a month and a half before "The Auspicious Event"³² which is the name given in Turkish history to the abolition of the corps. It is possible that this was done merely out of habit, a reverence for tradition

30 BOA, CSM, 139, 6990, 29/Z/1152

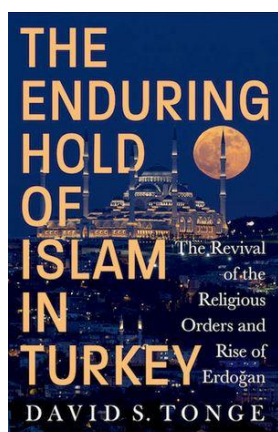
31 BOA, HAT, 1390, 55402, 29/Z/1203

32 İşin, *Sherbet & Spice*, p. 185

or that it was a subtle form of appeasement in that, even while relations may have been tense between the janissaries and the sultans the baklava and *akide* kept being exchanged. It is my intention to use this work in my thesis to demonstrate the symbolism of both the changes and consistencies power dynamics in the domestic power structures of Istanbul at this time.



Book Reviews & Publications



The Enduring Hold of Islam in Turkey The Revival of the Religious Orders and Rise of Erdoğan

by **David Tonge**

Journalist & writer who has spent most of his life in Greece & Turkey, was Guardian and Observer correspondent in Athens, wrote on the Soviet Union during its final years.

This is his own book review on his latest book

Hardback 384 Pages Published: 03/10/2024

on the revival of the Islamic orders in Turkey and the hold of Erdoğan and provides a very meaningful insight in his way of thinking.

A new history of modern Turkey, revealing its fifty-year retreat from Kemalist secularism

This is the first account in English of how Islamic religious orders dating back to Ottoman times have risen to dominate and define the future of Turkey, Europe's awkward neighbour and the major power in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Given its determined programme of secularization during the Atatürk period, Turkey is often projected as a model for the compatibility of Islam with parliamentary democracy. In this book, I reveal the limitations of that secularisation and its progressive reversal in what is a profoundly religious country where 90% of Turks describe themselves as religious or considerably religious. As he shows, the Turks' religious identity is being progressively dominated by branches of one of Islam's great religious orders, the Naqshbandis, whose profoundly anti-Western ethos was honed by British and French colonial incursions into the heartland of their faith. His tale is thus a salutary alternative to the wishful narrative developed by Western chancelleries during the Cold War, one which projected Turkey as a westernising democracy.

This revival of Islam, leavened with the renewal of Turkish nationalism, fuelled President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's rise to power, and will shape the regime that succeeds him. But, if the autocratic President is the new norm for a country long feted for balancing Islam with western concepts of modernisation, he emerges as both product and cause of the rise of Islamism in Turkey. As nationalism takes on fresh vigour, will this change? Past analysis has neglected this resurgence of the religious orders, but Erdoğan himself was nurtured by one of them, joined a second, cooperated hand-in-glove with a third (that of the infamous Fethullah Gülen), and now has the support of two others.

For those brought up in post-World War II Turkey, history largely started with the creation of the Republic in 1923. But such an approach failed to explain the changes which have taken place during the past two generations as religion and nationalism have moved to centre stage. To understand these, one must remember that Islam originally came to Anatolia from the heart of Central Asia and spread to the walls of Vienna. And then faced a protracted and searching debate as the Ottomans sought to come to terms with the ravages of a rapacious Europe and local nationalisms.

Modern scholarship now presents Kemalism in less black-and-white terms than those used by its more ardent advocates. The reality is that secularizing policies lasted only one generation. Three-quarters of the prime ministers who ruled Turkey after 1950 took measures favouring Islam. The secularisation of the early Republic – which was always more nuanced than its supporters would have us believe – has thus long been overtaken by the return of Islam to the central role it had in society through the six centuries of the Ottoman Empire. Most analysis of the country tends to deny the recrudescence of nationalism and religion, instead adopting a teleological vision of an upward march from Islamic empire to secular republic. But the power of these atavistic forces is the reality today as Turkey rises with arguably fewer regional competitors than at any time since the sixteenth century and with the orders feeding an aggressively anti-Western narrative, as do the perceived lessons of history.

The book starts and ends with the present. It traces the role of the religious orders as an integral component of Islam, helping mediate between the believer and an austere Almighty, and long acting as a key element of social stability. It explains, in a way which is often neglected, the scars left by the powers of Europe as they dismembered the ageing Empire and by the Great War. For today's Turks, Europe's attempts to emasculate the defeated Ottoman Empire with the Treaty of Sèvres are a far more searing warning than, say, defeat in Vietnam is for most Americans. In this nostalgia for a Golden Age the anti-colonial teaching of the orders which have come to dominate modern Turkey shapes the country's discourse.

After setting the background, I paint the tensions of the early Republic as, proclaiming secularism, it sought to bring a deeply-engrained religion under state control. He next explores the growth of the Naqshbandis (the only Sufi tariqah which traces its lineage to Prophet Muhammad) from their origins in Central Asia through Mughal Delhi to their international predominance today. This progressive undermining orders during Turkey's communities to industrial Gülen's long march into showdown with his long-



is followed by a detailed description of the of this secularism and of the growth of the wrenching transformation from peasant powerhouse. Inherent to this is Fethullah the heart of the state and his eventual term ally, the current President. This leads into an analysis of today's Turkey as Erdoğan builds on the religious and nationalist

foundations laid by earlier Islamist politicians. The book concludes by describing what the hold of Islam and of the orders means for the future.

The book draws on the experience of half a life lived in Turkey, part of this as a journalist for the *BBC*, *Financial Times*, *Guardian*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Observer* and others, when the author came to know the country's leaders such as Süleyman Demirel, Turgut Özal, and Bülent Ecevit. He thus lived the change as the breezy, self-confident heirs of the Republic were displaced by the current masters of the country. For those of his generation, brought up to believe that religion and nationalism had been displaced, here and elsewhere in the world, it has been a salutary lesson.

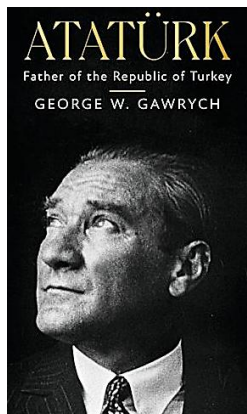
In writing the book, the author met and talked with some orders' leaders, participated in dervish rituals, travelled with one Sufi sheikh through the Balkans, and learnt to read the messages of the dervishes' tombs. He visited faculties of theology and talked to historians, sociologists and political scientists. And he delved deeply into recent scholarship, local and foreign, drawing also on contemporary Turkish newspapers and political reviews. Turkey's Islam has thus been influenced by the incursions of the west, leading both to changes in the emphasis of the religion and to the development of the nationalism which is resurgent in Turkey. This linkage lies at the heart of Turkey today, enabling President Erdoğan's rise to power and shaping the regime that succeeds him.

Illuminating and understanding Turkey's realities of faith and religious politics have never been more important.

Introduced and assessed by the author himself

David Tonge

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Atatürk: Father of the Republic of Turkey

by **George W. Gawrych**

London: IB Tauris, 2023
ISBN 978-0-7556-5181-8.
Pp 279; index, bibliography.

There are many works in English-speaking scholarship on Atatürk and his life. To name only a very familiar few: Kinross' early work (even if he did not speak Turkish) captured the heady exhilaration of building the new nation. Andrew Mango's biography brought together a masterly synthesis of the secondary Turkish sources, particularly the reminiscences of those who had known and worked with Atatürk. Bernard Lewis' *Emergence* remains a cornerstone for anyone interested in Turkish modernity, with an unsurpassed account of the way that the Ottoman Empire gave way to the Republic. Gawrych, the author of the book under review, himself has published a well-regarded work on the young Atatürk. To this list one must add the immeasurable wealth of books

in Turkish, as well as those in other European languages. Is there, then, any reason to publish another?

The answer is yes: Gawrych's *Atatürk: Father of the Republic of Turkey* is a remarkably interesting work. The first thing to say is that the title really should be 'Atatürk: an Intellectual Biography', for Gawrych centres his account on the development of Atatürk's formidable journey through the world of books and ideas, from his earliest schooldays to his time in the military academy, to his campaigning and finally the creation and establishment of the Republic. To this end, Gawrych has trawled Atatürk's own writings meticulously. All readers will have heard of Atatürk's great speech, the six-day account that he himself gave to the second congress of the Republican People's party in 1927. That was a remarkable document in itself, but there are many more. Their official publication between 1998-2005 amounts to 30 volumes, with 12 further published volumes of his note-books, to say nothing of his letters, official and personal.

Atatürk began publishing when still a junior officer when he read and commentated on German works on military strategy and followed this up by issuing training manuals for his officers to read and follow. He maintained this habit of writing didactic works even as his fame and position in the country grew, writing for example *Medeni Bilgiler*, published in the name of Afet İnan, and containing his conception of appropriate and civilised behaviour. He continued also to publish under İnan's name, for example *The Duty of the Soldier*.

Atatürk's reading was equally extensive. Even as the fighting raged in the Dardanelles, he called for novels in French to read in order to take his mind off the terrible slaughter during his resting hours. This habit intensified throughout his lifetime, so that by the time of his death he had a substantial library. The topics that he read were manifold: from philosophy to economics, law and history. Durkheim too, was amongst his reading, as was Gustav le Bon. French was his main foreign language, but he equally devoured work in Turkish and was happy to receive inscribed copies from their authors which he also read. Gawrych recalls to our attention to Atatürk's habit of underlining important passages in red, something that puzzled me when I saw it amongst intellectual friends in Turkey – I see now from where this derives. The passages so marked were eventually collected into an edited series of a further 20 volumes, published in 2001.

Simply to reiterate what an author has set out to do in each chapter is not very good style in a review, but it has perhaps some merit here, because many of the readers of this journal will themselves have thought as to how they may write or teach about Atatürk. How then, does Gawrych go about his formidable task? The **first chapter** looks at Atatürk's military career, tracing how he rose from being an army cadet to a general, ending with the Greek invasion at the end of the Great War. As the war was coming to an end, Atatürk published a work known in English as *Conversation with Officer and Commander*. Gawrych writes that according to Atatürk:

A commander had to be a 'father' (*baba*) to his soldiers, caring for them as 'the sons of the nation', not as a 'herd', but as 'human beings', appealing to the emotions of 'fame and honor' (*şan ve şeref*). War for Atatürk comprised unexpected and unique events. Field manuals and the classroom, although valuable for presenting the basics could not prepare officers for all occurrences... *Conversation* revealed an idealistic side to Atatürk, 'Human

beings can only be commanded and directed when their aspirations and ideas take concrete form.’ (pages 18-19).

Tellingly, one passage apparently did not reach the published version “Hey nation, hey Turkish woman, you who are wrapped in a 600-year-old veil, but once had an open forehead for 5,000 years. Do you sing of those 5,000-year-old traditions to your sons whom you give to command as officers? Did you develop moral character in them with those songs?” (page 19).

Chapter 2 is entitled ‘Balancing the art of statesman and commander-in-chief’ and takes the story through from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Sévres and the defeat of the invading forces, whilst **Chapter 3** covers Lausanne and the establishment of the Republic. The story, of course, is familiar. The great advantage of Gawrych’s approach, however, is that looking at the details of Atatürk’s writings makes us realise how gradually and carefully he planned each move, his reading fed into his life creating a triangle: ideas and writings; conversations and interaction with his immediate followers, and then their translation into political reality.

Chapter 4 covers the early life of the Republic, including an interesting account of the way that Atatürk experimented with both an opposition party, and with İmam-Hatip schools before, eventually, closing them down altogether (they were of course started again after the Second World War, gradually rising to their ubiquitous level today). **Chapter 5** examines the establishment of the nation, in particular the way that any sense of Kurdish nationalism was crushed. **Chapter 6**, in turn, looks at the implantation of secularism, and **Chapter 7** the creation of new education foundations, with particular emphasis on the new university system having experimented with, and then rejected, the old *Darülfünun* (university). **Chapter 8** describes the implementation of women’s rights, and **Chapter 9** combines health and economic development. The **final two chapters** are broader: the first looks at the place of the Republic in the world and is followed by a conclusion.

Gawrych’s book is not a detailed work of literary analysis. The respective works that Atatürk wrote are closely referenced but not analysed as works of writings in themselves. The extraordinary changes that Turkish has lived through, first the alphabet change, then the simplification of the language and the creation of new words means that any such analysis would be complex albeit fascinating to present. However, even if challenging such an effort would be very worthwhile, for it would surely contain major chapters on the *Great Speech*, as well as on the *Medeni Bilgiler*. I would earnestly suggest to Gawrych that he follows up this work (if he can bring himself to return to a subject to which he has already made such a sustained contribution) with *Atatürk the Writer*. The obvious counterpart in this respect is Churchill, whose respect for Atatürk is well-known and for whom Keith Aldritt’s *Churchill the Writer* helped in 1991 to open a rich vein of scholarship that still continues to this day. Just as with Churchill, it would help us to realise that though certainly Atatürk wrote from his own point of view, it does not mean that he was a poor historian of his time. There is a lot more than just self-glorification in the *Great Speech*.

What this splendid monograph already does however is change our conception of Atatürk as a man. The received idea is something as follows: that Atatürk learned most of his approach from his early membership of the Committee of Union and Progress, then implemented these ideas after he became president. It is certainly over simple. Atatürk formed the kernel of what he wished to achieve in those early years, but he

nurtured and continued this passion for ideas throughout his life, maturing and revising his thought whilst at the same time literally becoming master of his brief. From the outset of his career Atatürk matched action with words. Gawrych helps us to realise that he was not just a soldier and statesman, but also a soldier and scholar. More prosaically, Atatürk's habit of drinking until far in the night, discussing the daily business of the country with its leaders, is well-known. What we can appreciate from Gawrych is that such evenings would be preceded by many hours of study before he would descend to the *sofra* for the evening's entertainment and, when he was not in the study, he appears to be undertaking exhausting tours across Anatolia, seeking to find out for himself what was going on in his country.

There is, in its great detail, much in this work for the specialist on Turkey to savour and to refresh their memory. Its clarity and careful exposition means that it would be perfectly suited to teaching, even for those who do not know Turkey. I can see it therefore as taking its place not only on courses to do with modern Turkey, but also those which cover the foundation of modern Europe, and on nationalism. The curious thing is that Atatürk in this respect achieved such a clear vision. Without the benefit of our now more than a century of the theorisation of nationalism, he seemed to work out in that heady period until his death in 1937 exactly what a nation might need in order to become successful as it throws away the trappings of empire.

This brings us to the tricky part of this kind of historiography. Atatürk's answer was a very twentieth-century one, in that he made no concession to multi-culturalism in as much as it might affect the body politic. Summed up simply, it was Turkey for the Turks and modernisation through an appreciation of the advances of western civilisation, making sure that any conception of religion as a guiding force was firmly kept at arm's length (other than in the army, where he apparently felt that it was useful to have some conception of belief in order to inspire the soldiery). The conception was rationalist, a pure outcome of the Enlightenment, maintaining that there was a single universal civilisation that may have been invented in Europe, but certainly did not belong to Europe in any bounded way.

This view may sit uneasily with those who, this century, try to maintain that culture is inextricably associated with power, and that there is no independent access to reality. Their reaction is, usually, to regard Atatürk as just another twentieth century dictator, unavailingly trying to assure that his country is built in his image. Gawrych's work is in many ways a useful corrective. He by no means absolves Atatürk's faults, noting for example that he had six men sentenced to capital punishment for desertion even early on in his career. However, what he does show once more that Atatürk was really neither a man of the left nor of the right. He was a genuine statesman, attempting to leave behind him a viable nation-state. In this effort, he was profoundly successful. Without him, as Mango said in a speech shortly before his death, regretting the extent to which revisionism has distorted our understanding of the past, there would indeed be no Republic of Turkey.

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David Shankland

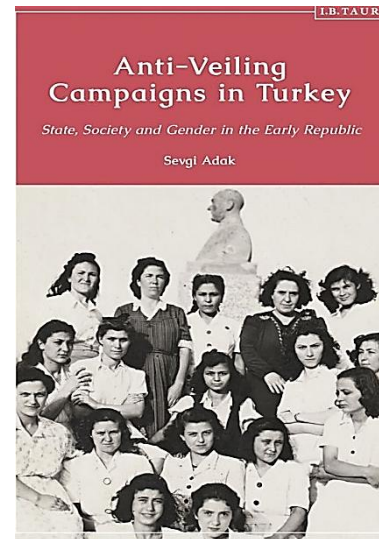
Royal Anthropological Institute

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Anti-Veiling Campaigns in Turkey: State, Society and Gender in the Early Republic

by **Sevgi Adak**

I.B. Tauris, 2023, Paperback, 222 pages.
ISBN: 978-1-7845-3792-0



In a very long Introduction to the book on the development of anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey, Sevgi Adak starts from the state-society interaction, which is based on a dualism, inherited by the newly founded Republic from the Ottoman past. It is explained that this dualism became more doctrinal after 1923, being based on the 'state-periphery' dichotomy, as coined by Şerif Mardin.⁴⁴ The state's elite standpoint in modernizing Turkish women did not change fully the traditions of peripheral people at large ('*halk*'), who were "imagined consisting of uneducated, quite religious and conservative masses." (p 4) The book's aim is thus explained as how the state endeavoured to create a 'modern' woman, similar to those in the West, in terms of democratic rights, education and appearance, and how this ideal was responded to by the people. The author points out to the fact that while the state's uncompromising approach was readily accepted in the urban areas where emancipated, professional women unveiled themselves straightaway, the patriarchal rural areas were not readily responsive to this change. The ordinary lives of women living in provinces where male dominance had been the norm for centuries remained unaffected by the new doctrines of the state. In examining the anti-veiling campaigns through the strategies and actions

⁴⁴ Mardin, Şerif. 'Centre-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics. *Daedulus* 102, no. 1 (Winter 1973) 169-90.

at the local level, Aral spreads out her analysis in five chapters for us to see the micro dynamics of the campaigns within their social milieu.

The first chapter and *çarşaf* (burqa) modernization in reminded that regulations were veils and light-comparison the in the interwar imposed on



starts with the debate on *peçe* (veil) carried out as part of the 19th century the Ottoman empire. The reader is even as early as in the 1870s set for the “use of transparent face coloured *feraces*”⁴⁵ (p 20). In Kemalist visions of women’s clothing period of the republic were not people and there was no strict ban in this area similar to



the Hat Law of 1925 which banned male citizens wearing a headgear other than a European hat. This Hat Law “...created a general atmosphere in which clothing change became a signifier for the modernization of the new republic, ... women’s dress was not an exception in this regard” (p 32). Probably because of this lenient attitude westernizing women’s clothing was claimed to be a relatively slow and a voluntary process.

Chapter Two shows that more local pressure was exerted in 1930s and especially after 1934, the year of multiple reforms, on women’s clothing, but this did not go well as it was also a period where more emphasis was placed on women’s emancipation. It was the year when women were granted political rights, to vote and be voted for. The administration tended to intervene at the local level through well-known dignitaries and newspapers for women’s emancipation, but at the same time was hesitant in intervening in the way people had been living their lives. As a result of this ambivalent stance a gap was created for the local non-state elites (religious and/or nationalistic individuals) to step in and raise their voice. As the author specifies, “...women’s participation in the public sphere wearing *peçe* and *çarşaf* implied a contradiction, having gained all their rights, modern Turkish women would thus be modern in dress as well” (p 63).

Chapter Three concentrates on the provincial scene, where the local elites consisting of members of influential families were divided among themselves in the sense that they supported either the central government’s policies to liberate women in general and westernize their clothing in particular, or they encouraged people resisting to these changes. While local governments organised ‘tea parties’ for women to encourage them to socialize, and distributed cloaks free of charge to replace the *çarşaf*, religious leaders kept on equating unveiling with in chastity in their sermons and frightening the congregations that funeral prayer should not be performed when unveiled women die. In the course of this chapter the reader is also introduced to the ways in which attitudes and reactions to women’s clothing were displayed by ordinary people. This reaction is defined as ‘popular resistance’ but is described as sporadic and unorganised. The chapter closes with an overall evaluation: “...although there was no mass protest or collective action against the anti-veiling campaigns, this hardly meant lack of resistance” (p 126).



⁴⁵ Overcoats

Chapter Four is the most interesting section in the book because it focuses on the primary target of the campaigns, i.e. the provincial women. They are shown to be diverse and innovative in response to the bans on women's clothing, resisting the clear-cut categorization as agents of 'passive compliance' and 'open resistance'. The author describes the emphasis of the chapter as "...women's roles as subjects of Kemalist modernization in the provinces, rather than its objects, and on their capacity to manipulate, adapt, modify and domesticate the new dress codes in complex ways" (p 18). Although accepting that compliance with the state policies would have meant



security for the individual, women's reaction in 1930s to central policies was to find ways which would be neither 'resistance' nor 'subordination'. Instead of disobediently wearing *peçe* and *çarşaf* in public places, some women confined themselves to their private spheres and stayed at home for long periods in protest of anti-veiling campaigns. Even when they had to go out they hid their faces behind umbrellas. Their concern was to comply with the patriarchal social order, to be respectful of religious norms and in some cases to avoid physical harassment on the streets. Despite this backdrop, however, anti-veiling campaigns were said to produce results after several decades of propaganda in the media, the training offered at *halkevleri* (Community Centres) and through the works of professional city women who presented themselves as role models.

Chapter Five provides a comparative case by looking at the anti-veiling campaigns of 1930s in Turkey, Iran and Albania. This is done in an exhaustive analysis of campaigns introduced both by the state and also by non-state local actors and institutions. In this comparison of three Muslim states, it is claimed that Turkey's policies have been more effective and less conflict-escalating than the other two. This success was attributed to the fact that Atatürk ruled the country with the help of a political party (RPP) which reached the provincial intelligentsia through various outlets organised by the party factions, such as the local newspapers, *halkevleri*, regional councils, eldermen councils, local government officers etc.

Sevgi Adak's book is a pioneer in its area, in the study of anti-veiling campaigns of 1930s, and prepares the ground for a better understanding of the centre/periphery dichotomy in terms of women's clothing, which in the post-1980s decades flared up again in the form of headscarf debates when the head-covering female students were banned from entering the universities. In this century-long troublesome interaction period the campaigns have not produced the intended results throughout the country and was detrimental for some women who "became indeed victims of state as well as male violence because they refused to unveil, but also because they wanted to remove the veil" (p 191).

The book is an essential read for people interested in anti-veiling campaigns in Turkey.

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Aşka Dair Ne Varsa

by **Handan Haktanır**
Ankara: Luna Yayınları. 2024



Some of us will remember Mrs Handan Ünlü Haktanır as the Founder and Honorary President of The Association of Turkish Women in Britain (ATWIB) established in 2002, when her late husband Korkmaz Haktanır was the Turkish Ambassador to UK. Now we know her as the translator of over 15 books, by such authors as Thomas Hardy, Halil Cibran, Oscar Wilde, Jack London, Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, and an author on her own right with a reference book, two novels and three-story books. Her first work was in 2010, 'Bir Avuç Mısır' (A Handful of Egypt), dedicated to her beloved late husband. As an archaeologist, she takes great interest in ancient Egypt- its history, roots, social structure and life, beliefs, and this is a great reference book.



Handan Ünlü Haktanır's latest book is a collection of eight stories, titled "Aşka Dair Ne Varsa" (All about love). The preface to the book is by her daughter (who is also a translator) Belgin Selen Haktanır, and the cover of the book is illustrated by her granddaughter Melis Erker. The stories in the book are about the drama of being a woman, of marriage, of relationships, and hidden truths, but all are about love. These are stories full of feeling and human compassion. Haktanır questions the concept of love and searches its relationship with our personal and societal identities. In that sense love is both a personal experience and a cultural phenomenon. Each story looks at love from a different angle: physical, psychological, societal and mystical. No matter how the individual story line progresses, there is always hope, although the reader cannot guess how the story will end until the final paragraph.

At the beginning of the book are two love poems by Cemal Süreya and Ahmed Arif. The stories start with poems by Haktanır, herself. These are beautiful lines of love and deep emotion, and one suspects dedicated to her beloved late husband, greeting him.

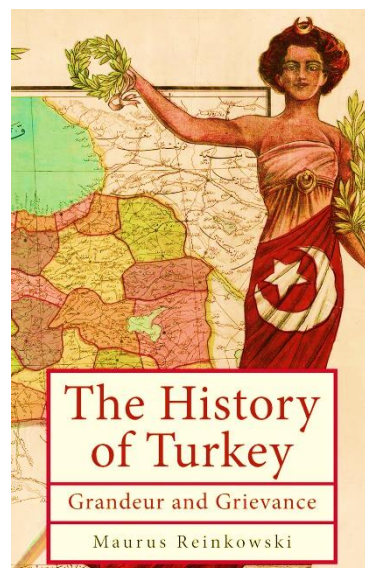
The language of the stories is rich with words drawn from a wide lexicon, and the sentence structures are perfect forms of Turkish. They reflect an author with years of experience, wealth of emotions and cultural experiences.

Çiğdem Balım
Indiana University

The History of Turkey: Grandeur and Grievance

by **Maurus Reinkowski**,
translated by **William J Walsh**

Boston, Mass., Academic Studies Press, 2023.
365 pp. Index. Bibliography. Maps.
ISBN 9798887192161 (hardback)
9798887192175 (paperback).



As an Ottoman historian, and Professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Basel, in Switzerland, Maurus Reinkowski has contributed original studies in German on late Ottoman rule in Palestine and the reform programme in the late Ottoman empire, besides co-authoring a study in English on Ottoman history during the Balkan wars and the first world war.⁴⁶

In this book, he ambitiously paints on a far broader canvas, covering the history of the late Ottoman empire and the Turkish republic up to 2023. Like the classic studies by Erik Zürcher and Bernard Lewis, his book makes the now generally accepted proposal that, to understand the history of the republic, study of the late Ottoman empire, in which some of the foundations of the modern state and society were laid, is a vital preliminary. After a preliminary chapter, outlining the physical geography and complex ethnic-cum-religious structure of Turkish society, the first of five long narrative chapters takes us through the Tanzimat era, from the *Hatt-i Şerif* of Gülhane of 1839 to the reign of Abdul Hamid II, then the disasters of the Balkan and first world wars and the 'National Struggle' of 1919-22, ending with the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923. Most of this account will sound quite familiar to many readers, although Reinkowski devotes more attention than most Turkish writers would probably have done – around seven pages, in fact - to the horrors of the Armenian genocide and the fate of the Assyrians, while conceding that around 'two and a half Muslims' also lost their lives in the first world war.

Maurus Reinkowski's second narrative chapter recounts the history of the Kemalist republic between 1923 and 1950. Again, most of this story will be familiar to English-speaking readers, but there is also an interesting and original section on the work of German and Austrian expatriates (mostly refugees from Nazism in the 1930s) especially in the planning and building of the new capital in Ankara. Intellectual movements of nationalism and secularism in the inter-war period are also well covered. This is followed by a brief account of events during the second world war and after, ending with the emergence of the Democrat Party and its election victory in 1950. The historical narrative is continued in the following chapter, outlining what Professor

⁴⁶ Hans-Likas Kieser, Kerem Öktem and Maurus Reinkowski, *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide*, (London, Bloomsbury, 2015).

Reinkowski defines as the period of 'precarious pluralism' between 1950 and 1980. Again, this is for the most part well-tilled ground, with an outline of the military interventions of 1960 and 1971, ending with the wave of violence which led to the third post-war coup of 1980.

In his fourth a fifth chapters, Maurus Reinkowski carries on the story from the 1980s to 2013, outlining first the period of neo-liberalism under Turgut Özal, the rise of Islamism in the 1990s, and the failure of successive ramshackle coalitions under Tansu Çiller, Necmettin Erbakan, Mesut Yılmaz and Bülent Ecevit to establish effective and stable government or tackle the country's mounting problems. There is substantial discussion of the Kurdish problem, the campaign of violence by the PKK which lasted until Abdullah Öcalan's arrest in 1999, and the complex situation of the Turkish Alevis.

Logically, Reinkowski could have started a new chapter with the change of direction coming with the establishment of the first AKP government following the party's victory in the 2002 elections, and the period of economic success and important improvements in constitutional democracy over the following ten years. Instead, he inserts the break in 2013, to deal in his final chapter with what he calls 'the road to another republic', lasting for another ten years, and signalled by Tayyip Erdoğan's shift towards something close to one-man rule. Following the original German edition, this account ends in March 2021. Accordingly, the text ends with a short 5-page update on events between then and May 2023.

Inevitably, anyone writing about recent history has the problem of keeping it up to date. In this context, one can speculate whether the most recent events – Erdoğan's sharp U-turns in economic and foreign policies, and the victory of the opposition in the local elections of March 2024 – would justify Reinkowski's prediction that Turkey would continue on its path towards ever-increasing authoritarianism and monopolisation of power' (p.297). Unfortunately, this is not the only defect of his book. Structurally, it seems poorly organised, with over-lengthy chapters and confusing switches from a chronological to a thematic approach. It offers a good deal of interesting interpretative

Treaty of Lausanne

- 1923
- Amended the treaty of Sevres
- Expelled the Greeks
- Turkey recovered Eastern Thrace, the Aegean Islands, Smyrna, and a strip of land along the Syrian border
- No reparations
- No limitation on Turkish military establishments outside the Zone of the Straits



material, but one wonders how much sense this would make to a newcomer to the subject looking for a straightforward chronological narrative. For instance, in his Chapter 1, Reinkowski bounces forward from the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 to the settlement of the Alexandretta dispute in 1939, then back to the attempt of Atatürk's life in 1926, and back again to the Sheikh Saiyyid rebellion of 1925, then forward to the Dersim revolt of 1937-38. The following chapter goes back to Atatürk's early career, before dealing with the constitutional changes of 1921 and 1924, followed by the other important reform laws of the 1920s. Similarly. later on, an account of the expansion of the railway network in the 1930s leads into mention of the introduction of high-speed trains in the last decade, followed by an account of Turkey's travails during the second world war. This chronological confusion may leave the reader wondering what to expect next.

In a work of this scope and length, some factual errors are bound to creep in, but this book still has too many mistakes and unsupported claims. Thus, on p.53 Reinkowski claims that if the Turks had remained neutral in the first world war, then "whichever

side won would happily divide up the Ottoman Empire among themselves”. This is pure speculation, and there is plenty of strength to the argument advanced, for instance, by A.J.P.Taylor, that the Ottoman empire’s only chance of survival would have been to stay out of the war altogether.⁴⁷ On the economy, on p.77 Reinkowski tells us that “the average growth rate from the 1920s into the late 1940s lagged at only 0.6%”. This is clearly contradicted by sources he uses elsewhere. Stalin’s demands over the Turkish straits came in 1945, not 1944, (p.130), while the claim that “in Turkey, a Kurd can be anything but a Kurd” (p.111) is quite unjustified, and has been for the last decade. On p.285 we are told that the re-opening of Aghia Sophia as a mosque in 2020 “was surely aimed at distracting from the country’s economic problems”. However, Reinkowski gives us no clear idea of what these were – in fact overall his treatment on both the economy and foreign policy is sparse and muddled. His account of ideological currents and conflicts is valuable, and the German edition of this book may well have met a real need for students in German-speaking countries. Nonetheless, there seems to have been little benefit in publishing an English translation, given its shortcomings, and the large number of comparable books, to say nothing of specialist studies, which are now available in English.

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⁴⁷ A.J.P.Taylor, *The First World War: an Illustrated History* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1966) p.77.

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