

POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY AND HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP  
SOME REMARKS ON STANFORD AND EZEL KURAL SHAW'S  
*HISTORY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND MODERN TURKEY*, VOL. II

I

As we survey the last thirty years of our century, during which the interest in Turkish studies has developed to a high degree, one fact, worthy of special consideration and criticism, stands out: many contemporary specialists in Turkish studies who do research into historical developments within the Greek and Turkish geographic regions come to conclusions which may be historically untrue, one-sided and even lacking in scholarship. This is usually due to a combination of the following facts: the exclusive reliance on the Turkish archives (which are admittedly very rich) that attract research-workers and the failure of such specialists in Turkish studies to consult the Greek historical documents (also very significant), and hence the complete neglect by the latter of Greek bibliography and the deliberate subordination of research to political expediency, often supported and furthered by some Turkish scholars.

In this context, the theory about the Turkish origin of Greeks from Asia Minor was defended with great zeal by the German Turkologist Gotthard Jäschke, without, however, any reliable proof<sup>1</sup>. The attitude of this German Turkologist is also to be found in works of other scholars<sup>2</sup> about Turkish history, e.g. by Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu<sup>3</sup> who has grave doubts about the Hellenic origin of Greeks from Asia Minor and draws the historically unfounded conclusion that even today these Greeks feel like foreigners within Greece<sup>4</sup>.

Similar are the statements of other Orientalists and Turkologists: In his book *Der Islam und das Griechische Bildungsgut*<sup>5</sup> the German professor Rudi Paret, trying to enhance the cultural role of Islam in the Near East defends a

1. Gotthard Jäschke, 'Die Türkisch-Orthodoxe kirche', *Der Islam*, XXXIX, 1964, pp. 95-129.

2. *Der Islam*, LIII/1, 1976, p. 184.

3. *Belleten*, XXXVIII, pp. 757f.

4. For the Byzantine Greek origin see by the Ottoman League for the Defense of Smyrna, and therefore completely political in origin: Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization, 11-15th Centuries*, Berkeley - Los Angeles - London, 1971.

5. Tübingen, 1950.

series of unfortunate theories and makes the comment that Hellenic culture has been given an exaggerated valuation<sup>6</sup>.

Another German professor, Bertold Spuler, reading his paper under the title 'Muslim and Orthodox in the Near East with special reference to Cyprus' at an International Congress<sup>7</sup> states that while the Ottoman conquerors had the power to carry out a complete extermination of the Christian element in Cyprus, they did not do so! He might have added with the same kind of "Logic" that Hitler might have carried out the complete destruction of many European people! This is a view like those propounded by other individuals under the patronage of International Organisations: e.g. Martin Hillenbrand, Director General of the Atlantic Institute for International Affairs, and the Turkish Ambassador Nuri Eren. Mention is made in this book<sup>8</sup> of "Greek expansionism", "Turkish Aegean Islands" etc. Moreover, there are hundreds of Turkish publications on this issue.

It is noteworthy that the Turkish writer Yaman Örs, presumably under the influence of exaggerated theories of foreign historians, has been recently belittling the role played by Hellenic culture. In his studies he wishes to establish the fact that the ancient Greeks did nothing but complete something which had its source outside Greece (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, India). He comes to the following conclusion: "*Even an attribute such as democracy, traditionally held to be of Greek origin, had its roots elsewhere*"<sup>9</sup>.

These statements contradict the opinions of earlier Turkish statesmen, held at a time when political interests were not yet strong enough to influence research. Thus in 1940 the Turkish Minister of Education, Hasan-Ali Yücel, encouraged the specialists of his country to provide for the study of Hellenistic times, because... "*The source of world culture, in which we are due to take part, is ancient Greece*", adding that those modern Turks who looked elsewhere for culture were misled; that Islamic culture had borrowed many elements from the ancient Greeks, and that the ancient Greeks mean for the Turks something more than countrymen since Troy is a part of Modern Turkey<sup>10</sup>.

The basic reason for these contradictory historical statements, made at the expense of the Greek element in history, is a conscious oversight of Greek historical sources. In addition many historians dealing with the Greek, Balkan

6. For a more balanced view of the role of Hellenism in Islam's Civilization see G. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam. A Study in Cultural Orientation*, Chicago - London, 1966.

7. *Πρακτικά τοῦ Πρώτου Διεθνoῦς Κυπριολογικοῦ Συνεδρίου* [Proceedings of the First International Congress on Cyprus], III/1, Nicosia, 1973, pp. 329-333.

8. *Turkey, NATO and Europe, a deteriorating relationship?*, Paris, 1977.

9. *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, XIV, 1974, pp. 102, 104.

10. *Tercüme*, V/29-30, 1945, pp. i-iv.

and Asia Minor environment do not take Greek bibliography into account.

The orientalist Bertold Spuler, mentioned above, had come to the same conclusion when he stated that Turkology cannot be considered complete without a consideration of Greek and Slavonic literature<sup>11</sup>. Franz Babinger, a more objective specialist in Turkish studies who was familiar with the Greek sources and was well versed in Greek history and bibliography, not only felt the need to take Greek sources into account, but also, comparing the trustworthiness of late medieval Greek and Ottoman historical works, came to the conclusion that the confused Ottoman historical sources are infinitely inferior to the accurate Byzantine historians. The terms he uses are, "barbaric" for the former and "careful artistic narrative" for the latter<sup>12</sup>.

Furthermore, the orientalist Hans Heinrich Schaeder (who was also well versed in Greek history and bibliography) acknowledged that one of the basic enriching and fertilizing elements in the formation of medieval Islam was Hellenic culture<sup>13</sup>. It is at the expense of objective research, that contemporary Turkologists do not take into account the statements of notable forerunners of their discipline to such an extent that they come to partial and wrong conclusions.

## II

Stanford J. Shaw, professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, and his wife, Ezel Kural, authors of *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*<sup>14</sup>, belong to this category of specialists in Ottoman and Turkish History who demonstrate undisguised prejudice in their research work. Although many scholars have written on this subject during the last years, Stanford Shaw states that he has aimed at an objective study using both Ottoman and European sources<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, he rightly accepts the fact that Ottoman history is connected with other peoples aside from the Turks, such as the Arabs, Serbs, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Bulgarians and Albanians<sup>16</sup>. After such an assertion, one would expect to see the chapters dealing with these peoples, based upon the relevant bibliography. This the Shaws' *History* does not do, as we shall see below:

Only the second volume will be considered here, because it deals with more recent events, known to most people, and we shall discuss only those

11. *Der Islam*, LIII/2, 1976, pp. 323-327.

12. *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke*, Leipzig, 1927, p. 7.

13. 'Der Orient und das Griechische Erbe', *Die Antike*, IV, 1928, p. 265.

14. Vol. I-II, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977, pp. XIII, 351 (I), XXI, 518 (II).

15. I, vii.

16. I, vii.

points concerning the Greeks<sup>17</sup>. This is enough to demonstrate the indefensible confusion of political expediency with research. Let us begin with Crete.

It is stipulated<sup>18</sup> that the Greeks of the island of Crete continually carried out massacres of the Muslims, whilst any attack of the Muslims against the Greeks was enough to upset European public opinion<sup>19</sup>.

It is natural for the authors of this book to express such opinions, because they do not take into account or ignore: a) the Archives the Turks left in Iraklion, containing approximately 500,000 documents, some of which have been translated into Greek and deal with the relations between the Greeks and Turks of the island at that time and which show a lot of abuses, violations of human rights etc.<sup>20</sup>, b) all the historical periodicals dealing with Crete and especially the 25 volumes of *Cretica Chronica*, where the period of the Turkish occupation of Crete has been examined by Greek and foreign scholars and show the unbearable conditions which led the Greek people of Crete to revolts, c) the holocaust of the Monastery of Arcady (1866), where the bones of the victims are still exhibited as testimony of the tragic fates to thousands of visitors<sup>21</sup>, d) the hundreds of descriptions of the Turkish occupation of Crete by reliable and notable travellers like the Austrian physician W.F. Sieber<sup>22</sup>, Elpis Melena<sup>23</sup>, all of which show the vivid descriptions of the tyranny and the corrupted Ottoman administration, e) the vast number of descriptions by Greek eye-witnesses that have provided a living testimony of their experiences under the Turks<sup>24</sup>.

The corruption of the Ottomans and especially of their taxation system has been acknowledged even by modern Turkish historians, such

17. For a fundamental and devastating review of the 1st vol. which covers the period 1280-1808, read the review of prof. V.L. Ménage in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXXXI, 1978, pp. 160-162.

18. pp. 151-152, The Revolt in Crete, 1866-1869.

19. This is repeated on page 207.

20. N. Stavrínidis, *Μεταφράσεις Τουρκικῶν Ἱστορικῶν Ἐγγράφων ἀφορῶντων εἰς τὴν Ἱστορίαν τῆς Κρήτης* [Translation of Turkish Historical Documents concerning the History of Crete], Iraklion, 1975-1976, 2 vol.

21. Timothy Veneris, *Τὸ Ἀρχάδι διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων* [Arcady through the centuries], Athens, 1938.

22. *Reise nach der Insel Kreta im Jahre 1817*, Leipzig, 1823.

23. 'Die Insel Kreta unter der Ottomanischen Verwaltung', *Internationale Revue*, II, Wien, 1867, pp. 497-657.

24. Zambelios-Kritovoulidis, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἐπαναστάσεων τῆς Κρήτης* [History of the Revolutions in Crete], Athens, 1897, edited by J. Kondylakis. The periodicals and newspapers of Crete: *Kritiki Estia*, *Kritiki Stoa*, *Minos*, *I Foni tou Laou*, *Drasis*, etc.

as Halil Inalcık (USA), who enjoys a reputation for objective scholars<sup>25</sup>.

On the subject of the Greek Revolution of 1821 as well, the conclusions of the authors are totally unjustified. It is wrong, for instance, to state that "most Greeks seem to have been satisfied with their situation in the Ottoman Empire"<sup>26</sup>. Objective Turkish scholars, who have written about the Greek Revolution, had to acknowledge its deep meaning. This is why the Turkish historian Ahmet Rasim, referring to the hero of the Greek Revolution, Regas Feraios, affirmed the following: "Impartial history respects and honours this patriot, whose name will go down in history as a brilliant example for the children of the Ottomans"<sup>27</sup>.

It is astonishing that the Shaws have not taken into account basic scholarly publications on this subject, as well as on subjects concerning other regions of which they speak. As regards Macedonia<sup>28</sup> for instance, there are the innumerable editions, in English, of the Institute for Balkan Studies (Thessaloniki), works such as the *History of Macedonia 1354-1833*<sup>29</sup> by Apostolos Vacalopoulos and many others.

In the course of the analysis of the cultural and scientific developments at the time of Sultan Abdülhamit, the Shaws<sup>30</sup> make no reference to the important contribution of the Greeks in all fields of the Government's activity. Other Turkish writers have recognised that contribution not only in this but also in preceding and subsequent periods<sup>31</sup>. One must also not forget that there were many Turks like Şemsettin Sami (1850-1904) who founded Modern Research in the Ottoman Empire<sup>32</sup>, so also there were many other Turks who were educated in a Greek "Millet" school, lived in a Greek environment attended Greek schools and made astonishing progress as a result<sup>33</sup>.

25. 'The Ottoman decline and its effects upon the Reaya', *Aspects of the Balkans*, 1972, pp. 338-354.

26. p. 17. For the specifically disadvantageous conditions under which the Greeks lived during the later Turkish rule see Speros Vryonis, 'The Greeks under Turkish Rule' in: *Hellenism and the First Greek War of Liberation 1821-1830. Continuity and Change*, Institute for Balkan Studies, no. 156, Thessaloniki, 1976, pp. 45-58.

27. *Resimli ve Haritalı Osmanlı Tarihi*, III, Istanbul, 1910, p. 1362.

28. pp. 207-211.

29. Thessaloniki, 1973.

30. pp. 155-156.

31. See Sinan Küneralp, 'Bir Osmanlı diplomatı Kostaki Musurus Paşa, 1807-1891', *Belleten*, XXXIV/135, 1970, pp. 421-431. Aziz Oğan, 'Th. Makridi'nin hatırasına', *Belleten*, V/17-18, 1941, pp. 163-169. A. Adnan Adivar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim*, Istanbul, 1970, pp. 146-149, 191-192, a.s.o.

32. Shaw, p. 253.

33. See Paul Hidirolou, 'Σημείωντες Τουρκοκρήτες' [Famous Turks from Crete], *Cretica Chronica*, XXIV/2, 1972, pp. 465-476.

No less can one ignore the dozens of famous Greek physicians that attended the Sultans. These include Nuh bin Abdülmennan, chief doctor to Sultan Ahmed III (Greek from Crete who had accepted the Islamic religion), Dimitri Morouzi, Spyro Mavrogenni Paşa, doctor to Sultan Abdülhamit II, Markos Pitsipios Paşa, Head of the Medical School, and many others. Since the Greeks were "the largest minority in the empire", as the Shaws themselves acknowledge<sup>34</sup>, how can the Shaws proceed to analyse and evaluate their role without having reference to the enormous body of Greek source materials, or at least to works which exploit these source materials?

A few comments should be made on the Shaws' treatment of the internal upheavals in Turkey during the period 1918-1923, the Greek campaign in Asia Minor and the ensuing Conference and Treaty of Lausanne<sup>35</sup>:

In this chapter<sup>36</sup>, where the bibliography on the Treaty of Lausanne begins one is surprised to discover that in all the bibliography cited as dealing with this subject, not a single Greek study is mentioned. This is surprising if we consider what an important role Greeks played in Asia Minor, where they not only fought but also lived actively for 3000 years. The existing Greek bibliography on this issue includes more than 500 works<sup>37</sup>.

Their conclusion on the Treaty of Lausanne and on the promises given by the Governments of both Turkey and Greece for the protection of the rights of minorities in their respective countries, is as follows: "*These provisions were accepted by the Turkish Government and have been observed in full to the present day*"<sup>38</sup>.

It seems that the Shaws have chosen to disregard the book of Faik Ökte, a high Turkish official and specialist in Economics, at the time (1942) when the abominable tax Varlık was imposed on the non-Muslim population of Turkey (Greeks, Armenians and Jews)<sup>39</sup>, where the violation of the Treaty of Lausanne is evident. Additionally there is the deportation of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, Konstantine V, on January 1925, that is, immediately after the signing of the Treaty, and the atrocious anti-Greek pogrom of 6th September 1955, which, according to the trial of the principal members of the former Government after the Turkish Revolution of May 1960, was fomented by the Turkish authorities of the day. The official Turkish figures proved

34. p. 206.

35. pp. 340-372.

36. pp. 369-372 and 460 to 462.

37. See Paul Hidioglou, 'Βιβλιογραφική Συμβολή εις την Ἑλληνικὴν Τουρκολογίαν' [Greek Turkology], *Epeteris*, VIII, Nicosia, 1978, pp. 253-405.

38. p. 368.

39. *Varlık vergisi faciası*, Istanbul, 1951.

at this trial mention 4,428 shops and workshops, 1,004 houses, 11 clinics, 27 pharmacies and laboratories, 110 restaurants, 12 hotels and boarding houses as Greek property destroyed under the approving eyes of the authorities.

Then there was the closing of the School of Theology in Heybeliada and the persecution of the Greeks in Turkey including mass deportations<sup>40</sup>.

Is this the meaning of "...have been observed in full to the present day"? Where are, and what has remained of the 4,390 Greek schools in Turkey, mentioned on p. 250 of the Shaws' *History*? The reader need but compare it with a recent book, written by the Turk Bilâl N. Şimşir under the patronage of ambassadors, generals and University professors in Turkey<sup>41</sup> to verify the violation of the Treaty and the intense desire on the part of the Turks to repudiate it as a whole. This however is not the only Turkish work. There are many more such works that the Shaws should not have overlooked when in effect verifying the respective violation of the Treaty. Inasmuch as their professed aim was objective, one must assume that such works were intentionally passed over in silence.

There are other important factors that increase our reservations as regards the objective contents of the work under consideration.

First, the systematic violation of the human rights of Greeks, Armenians and other peoples in Turkey, and especially the most crucial problems arising from this violation within and outside Turkey in the last years overlooked in this book. The unsuspecting reader, who is unaware of the imprisonments, tortures, rapes, murders and persecutions of the Kurds in Turkey, gets the impression from the Shaws' book that neither the Articles of the Turkish Constitution, nor any Treaty concerning minorities and their rights, are violated. Meanwhile, many works, which the Shaws intentionally avoid quoting in order to persuade the reader that "*These provisions (of the Treaty of Lausanne) were accepted by the Turkish Government, and have been observed in full to the present day*"<sup>42</sup>, reveal a horrible picture, completely opposed to the image of perfection conveyed in their work<sup>43</sup>.

40. The Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* on 11 October 1964 had boasted that during 1964 "30.000 Turks of Greek origin have left Turkey permanently, in addition to the Greek nationals already expelled".

41. *Aegean Question. Documents, I, 1912-1913*, Ankara, 1976, pp. CCXXII, 677.

42. p. 368 and on other pages.

43. These works include: *Aufruf. An die Regierungschefs und die Ausschüsse der Teilnehmerstaaten. An die Internationalen Institutionen und Vereine*, Edited by the "Komitee für die Verteidigung der National Demokratischen Rechte des Kurdischen Volkes in der Türkei", Amsterdam, 1977 (also in English). Martin Short - Antony Mc Dermott, *The Kurds*, Edited by the Minority Rights Group, London, 1977 (Report No. 23, third Edition). *Briefing on Turkey (Turkey in Outline)*, Edited by Amnesty International, with a paragraph (9) about

The Shaws again, in their analysis of the Cyprus problem, ignore the immense and many-sided international bibliography on this question, digressing into evaluations which are historically untrue and contrary even to common sense.

Although before 1955 apart from 4-5 articles or books there were no Turkish studies to be found, indicating a lack of scholarly interest, the increasing Turkish political interest accounts for the production of innumerable historical works on Cyprus during the last 15 years. These serve political purposes to such a scandalous extent, that in this 15-year period the studies and books written by the Turks number more than 200 and have created a new and biased history of Cyprus. They obliterate the past and present a new historical image of the island seen entirely from Turkish point of view, and this, in turn, is the only motivation of the authors of the *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*.

The practice of not taking into account the extensive documentation and literature in other languages, such as Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian etc. not to mention English, French, German, also raises ethical questions and many doubts about the validity of the Shaws' one-sided *History*. Furthermore, even if they chose to ignore these sources or the accounts of foreign missionaries and the thousands of survivors, who have testified that children were put in single file and shot to see how many could be killed with a single bullet, they cannot overlook the numerous dossiers preserved in the archives of every one of the occupied non-Ottoman countries in the Balkans and elsewhere<sup>44</sup>. Obvious acts of omission, also characteristic of the doctrinaire schol-

the imprisonments of the Kurds. Heinz Gstrein, *Volk ohne Anwalt. Die Kurdenfrage im Mittleren Osten*, Freiburg, 1974. *Kurdistan in Turkey*, Edited by the International Relations Committee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, London, 1977 (Know the Kurds Series, No. 4). *Rassistisch-Faschistische Praktiken gegen die Kurdische Presse in der Türkei*, Edited by the "Organisation Revolutionärer Kurden aus der Türkei", Zürich, 1977. Emmanuel Braquet, *Les Kurdes*, Paris, 1977. Jürgen Roth, *Aufstand im wilden Kurdistan*, Baden-Baden, 1977 (along with other revealing information there is also the startling disclosure, pp. 158-159, that foreign help, originally destined for the Kurdish victims of the earthquake in Turkey, was forwarded by the Turkish Authorities to the Turkish Cypriots!) *Roja Welat* (Edited in Ankara on 21.9.1977 and confiscated the same day by the Turkish Police. Besides this work other previous editions were confiscated before their circulation). Yves Ternon, *Les Arméniens. Histoire d'un Genocide*, Paris, 1977. *Treatment of Minorities in the Ottoman Empire and in Turkey*, Edited by the Armenian National Committee, London, 1977. Theodor Veiter, *Nationalitätenkonflikt und Volksgruppenrecht im 20. Jahrhundert*, München, 1977, Edited by the "Internationales Institut für Nationalitätenrecht und Regionalismus" (pp. 43-44, 66-67, 91). Majeed Jafar, *Under-underdevelopment. A regional case study of the Kurdish area in Turkey*, Helsinki, 1976 [Studies of the Social Policy Association in Finland, 24].

44. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ed.), *The Anti-Greek persecutions in Turkey after the*



arship of the Shaws' *History*<sup>45</sup>, put to a failure to use the relevant diplomatic documents of the major Western Powers<sup>46</sup>.

This is why the two-volume survey entitled *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* cannot be put forward in any way as a textbook or definitive work in the field.

*declaration of war in Europe*, Athens, 1917, in Greek. *The Greek Expedition in Asia Minor. The Telegrams of the correspondents of the International Press*, Athens, 1921, in Greek. *The Anti-Greek persecutions in Turkey between 1908-1921 before the 3rd National Assembly of Athens*, Athens, 1921, in Greek.

45. pp. 125-126, 200-205, 314-317, 330-331, 356-357.

46. For example, on the Armenian question see the following material presented by Prof. Richard Hovanissian, of the University of California, Los Angeles, in a public lecture in New York (in Nov. 1977). This material is to be published in the near future: United States of America, The National Archives, Record Group 59, *Despatches from United States Ministers to Turkey, 1818-1906*, Microfilm Publication M46, rolls 56-58, March 1894-August 1895. *Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, 1801-1906*, M77, rolls 166-167, October 1888 - December 1896. Great Britain, House of Commons, Correspondence relating to the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey, Sessional Papers, 1895, vol. CIX, part I, c. 7894 (Events at Sassoun and Commission of Inquiry at Moush), part 2, c. 7894-1 (Commission of Inquiry at Moush: Procès-verbaux and Separate Dispositions). France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, *Documents diplomatiques: Affaires arméniennes: Projets de reformes dans l'Empire Ottoman, 1893-1897* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1897). Cf. also the works: Hovsep Babigian, *La situation des Arméniens en Turquie exposée par des documents (1908-1912): Rapport en 1909 sur les massacres arméniens d'Adana. The Adana Massacres: Who is Responsible? The Parliamentary Commission to Adana*, Constantinople, 1909. Z. Duckett Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor during April, 1909*, London, 1913. George Brézol, *Les Turcs ont passé la: Recueil de documents... sur les massacres d'Adana en 1909*, Paris, L'Auteur, 1911. J. d'Annezy, *Au pays des massacres, saignée arménienne de 1909*, Paris, Bloud, 1910. M. Séropian, *Les vêpres ciliciennes: Les responsabilités: Faits et documents*, Alexandria, Della Rocca, 1909 and some others.