

Review Essays

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MODERN FRENCH HISTORIANS ON OTTOMAN HISTORY

Mantran Robert, ed., *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paris, Fayard, 1989, 810 pp., maps and annexes

This book is the outcome of a collective effort by a group of twelve French specialists on Turkey, not counting the acknowledged and unacknowledged assistants who helped in one way or another in putting it together. It is full of surprises since each one of the contributors has his own particular style and method of analysis, even the spelling of proper names, all of which make it lack both unity and uniformity. As for a general thesis, besides a certain tendency to follow the line of modern Turkish historiography, there is none, nor was it possible when so many cooks got together to make the broth.

The project was probably undertaken out the initiative of the editor who made his reputation with his doctoral dissertation on Ottoman Constantinople during the second half of the seventeenth century. From what we are led to understand in the preface, he assigned tasks, directed, encouraged, supervised, coordinated, read and approved of the texts which were finally published. It goes, therefore, without saying that he is accountable for the quality of the work of the entire team.

Dr. Mantran's justification for the division of the task between so many contributors is in the nature of what we would expect from any editor of this type of team writing. The aim is to bring to the general reader first-hand analytical work from the specialists themselves, a single person being supposedly incapable of executing alone such a gigantic task. We all know, of course, that this approach, along with its merits, has also its demerits, which will be presented in the following lines.

In the first place, it seems to us that no one can reasonably deny the consequence, the continuity of the presentation of an organic whole with a certain degree of unity in style when the entire text comes out from the same pen, handled by a single, well-informed, competent and honest scholar. In fact, experience has shown that when you have so many people writing on so many different aspects of the same main theme, repetitions, contradictions, variations in emphasis, differences in opinion and in interpretation of the facts are bound to crop up here and there, no matter how vigilant the editor might wish to be.

The presentation is both chronological and thematic, certain contributors presenting a period in a general way and in a traditional manner, i.e. beginning and ending with a reign of an Ottoman Sultan, others treating a particular topic of some importance diachronically. Except for the tenth chapter, we find neither footnotes nor bibliographical references in support of the text and have no way of verifying certain assertions which we find in this book for the first time. Obviously, we are supposed to take for granted what every contributor in this book offers us: if it is new and unusual we must presume that it has already appeared somewhere else in their own analytical work. The general bibliography is selective, as it ought to be, and contains some primary sources considered important by the authors but insufficient in so far as monographs and special studies are concerned.

Of course, in the case of a manual of general history which is addressed to an educated public, or even to beginning students, the absence of references to the sources is justified. However, by the same token, the extensive use of Turkish terminology, some of which is not even translated or explained, when used for the first time, appears somewhat paradoxical. Indeed, some contributors are so infatuated with Turkish terminology that they omit to use a perfectly acceptable equivalent from current French usage. We do not understand, for example, why the word *kiosque*, which passed from Turkish to French and to most West European languages as well, should take the phonetic form of *Köçhk*, which just makes it, unnecessarily, more difficult to recognize instantly by an average reader.

Generally speaking, in the entire book there is a lack of coherence in the pursuit of a common purpose, methodological laxity, and *lacunae* in the glossary as well as in the three different indexes which, besides being inconvenient in their use as keys to the text, do not always answer the call. There is a four-page glossary of Turkish terms used abundantly in the text, as some of the contributors are in the habit of using in their analytical works, and three different indexes of about forty-five dense pages, the first of names of persons,

the second of subject-matter, and a third of geographical and ethnic names.

Though at first glance impressive, this three-fold index, incomplete as it is, complicates more than it helps. We believe one general index would be much easier to consult. But the problem is even more complicated because the indexing does not seem to have been done properly. When we tried, for example, to look up for the word *janissaires*, we did not find it in any one of the three indexes. Since it appears in the glossary under its Turkish form *yenitcheri*, we looked for it in the index by subject-matter and, indeed, we found it there. But since the two words mean the same thing and since they are both used, sometimes in its French form, sometimes in its Turkish form (text: pp. 46, 130-1, 191-5 and index p. 786), why not index them both, or at least use a cross-reference?

Whoever made the index of personal names seems to have confused the name of the Seldjoukide Sultan of Iconion, Ala al Din Khaykabad II (1284-1307), to whom reference is made by Irene Beldiceanu on p. 29, as Alaeddin, with another person of the same name, who happened to be a son of the founder of the Ottoman dynasty (p. 758). The well-known historic city of Brusa is sometimes presented as *Bursa*, sometimes as *Brousse*, even by the same contributor, whereas the proper names *Zu'l-Kadr* (pp. 162 and 178) and *Zulkadriyye* (pp. 143 and 144) are presented in the index as *Zulkadr* and *Zulkadriye*. The city of *Kamenets*, in Podolia, is mentioned twice in the text (pp. 245 and 303) but in three different spellings, whereas the city of *Avlona*, in Albania, is presented in three different forms: *Avlonya*, *Valona* and *Vlôre*: it is indexed under its first form (p. 790), but on p. 601 we find it under a fourth form (*Vlora*), indexed as a different city (p. 801). These are only a few examples which undermine our confidence as to the usefulness of the three indexes.

To illustrate further the lack of coordination which prevails among the collaborators in this book, we shall take the name of *Khudavendigâr*, which appears next to the name of Murad I in the list of the Ottoman Sultans on p. 733. In this case this word has the meaning of "sovereign", which is left untranslated. The person who wrote the chapter covering this Sultan's reign is not employing this surname, but on p. 661, in a chapter devoted to Ottoman art, we find it in the form of *Hudavendigâr*, again not translated. However, in the index of geographical and ethnic names, we do meet this name in the form of *Hüdavedingâr* as a geographical location in the region of Brusa.

Some of the contributors, covering the period of Ottoman expansionism in the Balkan Peninsula, in their eagerness to show off their knowledge of the Turkish language, give us only the Turkish names of cities at the time of

their conquest by the Ottomans. One, for example, speaking of the Ottoman conquests of 1361 in Eastern Thrace, refers to the capture of Luleburgaz, of Tchorlu, of Misinli and, later on, of Misivri and Terkos. Then we read about the taking of Aladgahisar in Serbia (1427-8), which we have to look up in one of the indexes to find out that he is referring to Krusevac.

In our opinion, those anachronisms could have been avoided, had the pre-Ottoman Greek, or Serbian, names been mentioned at least once, when their conquest by the Ottomans was mentioned for the first time. And this, of course, applies to all other cases throughout the book, sparing the ordinary reader from having to consult specialized dictionaries and encyclopedias in order to clear up the confusion provided by all this erudite but one-track information. After all, is it not the purpose of this type of writing to be understood by the greatest possible number of readers?

With reference to the contradictory information offered in this book at this point we shall only mention one case, reserving the rest of our remarks when we shall come to each contribution separately. Let us take the question regarding the succession of power from Orkhan to Murad I. In one of her previous contributions Mrs. I. Beldiceanu affirms that Orkhan died in March, 1362, and was succeeded by his son Murad in an orderly way¹, something which is taken up and confirmed by another contributor on p. 39. We fail then to understand the meaning of the uncertainty surrounding the year of this succession as we read the list of Ottoman Sultans on p. 733.

And now, let us turn to the maps, which are furnished as an aid to the reader. The first of them is far too simplistic to be of much help since some important place names, mentioned in the text, are nowhere to be found, whereas some others, such as Nicomedia, Nicaea, Bursa, and Adrianople are not located correctly on it. On p. 140, the map-maker places the battle of Tchaldiran (23 August, 1514) between Ottomans and Iranians, east of Lake Urmia, i.e. way off its real location, whereas on p. 143 it is stated clearly—and correctly—that this place is north-east of Lake Van.

In some other maps we meet some gross anachronisms. On p. 86, for example, on a city plan showing Constantinople in 1453, are indicated such interesting buildings as the old Sarai, the Topkapi Sarai as well as the mosks of Mehmed II and of his son and successor Bayazid II, who died in the next century. Anachronistic also it is to talk, right from the beginning, about an Ottoman Empire for a period during which the Ottomans themselves did not

1. *Recherches sur les actes des règnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad*, München, 1967, p. 161.

consider their own state more than a successful emirate of the Turkish borderlands. In the final analysis, it was up to the editor of this collection of essays to prevent the use of some words expressing notions applicable to later times and to avoid railroading the Ottomans into an imperial context too soon. Though symbolic, the year 1453 has a certain importance in this regard. After all, on this question in particular we are dealing mostly with symbolism.

The first contributor, Mrs. Irene Beldiceanu, research fellow of the prestigious C.N.R.S., well-known for her meticulously analytical contributions on some important economic and social aspects of the history of the birth and growth of the Ottoman establishment, contributes the first chapter which deals with the reigns of Osman and of Orkhan. This is a period during which the first Ottomans discovered their vocation in raiding successfully territories inhabited by Greek population for booty and slaves. It is also a period of growth and transformation of a rather insignificant Turkish beylik of the north-western frontier of the Turkish — dominated Asia Minor into an emirate, tributary to the Ilkhanide sovereigns of Iran and to their representatives in eastern and central Anatolia to about the middle of the fourteenth century, when the Ottomans finally freed themselves of that tutelage and started acting on their own. Of course, some of these pertinent facts are not presented in this short, yet at times analytical, essay.

Following the unfortunate habit of modern Turkish historiography, which takes for granted that all history begins and ends with the Turks and which also tends to systematically cover up the Greek subsoil upon which the Ottomans built their state and institutions, we cannot but see in this twenty-page contribution gaping holes to this indeed very important period of the history of the foundation, consolidation and expansion of the Ottoman state. As a result of these omissions, the causal explanation of the rise of this state was left unattended: this is simply regretful, because at the end of this chapter an alert reader will still want to know why the Ottomans succeeded where so many others before them failed so miserably.

Mrs Beldiceanu's text is based mostly upon her own published analytical work with some old and new historical facts interspersed with some fiction, all connected with the rise of the first Ottomans. This reviewer must admit that he was rather surprised not to find in the general bibliography the works of Gibbons, Köprülü and Arnakis. He even suspects they were not even consulted, which raises the following methodological question: can our own analytical work, no matter how highly we might think of it, be a valid substitute for all previous research accomplished by others on the same topic?

A second member of the group, Mr. Nicolas Vatin, with credentials from

the French School of Anatolian Studies of Constantinople and research fellow of the above-mentioned C.N.R.S. as well, contributed the next two chapters, which are dense and cover one of the most decisive and eventful periods of Ottoman history during which the Ottoman establishment transformed itself into a state of imperial proportions and found its way into prominence amongst the greatest powers of the day. In a factual style and in great detail, the reader is offered a series of battles and military movements in a way which we thought had ceased to be practiced in France under the impact of the new methodological approaches put into practice by the students of the Annals School. For all that we knew, descriptive, military history, or “*histoire-bataille*”, without explanations of economic and social causalities was out of style by at least two generations of historians.

This second member of the team picks up the story at the beginning of the reign of sultan Murad I (1362) and brings it up to the end of the reign of Bayazid II in 1512, a very important period of Ottoman history indeed. Since the issue involving the legitimate use of the imperial terminology has already been raised² and since it comes up again and again, it is worth while adding a few more words to clear up the air, at least to our own understanding. As we all know, with the help of the Popes, ever since the ninth century, the titles of “emperor” and “empire” had been used as arms in the permanent war which was waged against Byzantium in the German and Latin West. When Byzantium was finally and irrevocably destroyed by the French knights in 1204, the imperial terminology was so depreciated as to escape the control not only from the hands of Greeks and Latins, but also from the Popes themselves. So long before the advent of the Ottomans, we have the Serbian and Bulgarian sovereigns self-styling themselves, as did so many others before them, “emperors” and their states “empires”. It is in this sense that one cannot blame too much our over-enthusiastic Ottomanists for falling into the same trap. We shall agree with them that the Ottoman state had reached imperial proportions by the end of the fourteenth century, but we shall refrain from using the title of “empire”, even abusively, before the 29th of May 1453. For this title to be taken seriously by anyone, it would be necessary to be proven that the Ottomans themselves used it officially. To the best of our knowledge they did not and for this reason we believe it to be anachronistic to stretch the imperial terminology to the very beginning of Ottoman history as it is done in this volume.

And now let us turn to the term “sultan” and see how it is used. Mrs

2. *Supra*, p. 328-9.

Beldiceanu (p. 29) and Mr. Vatin (p. 42) treat Murad I (1362-1389) as a sultan. If indeed that was the case, which remains to be proven through contemporary sources, we fail to understand why Murad's son and successor, when he thought he was about to conquer Constantinople, in 1397, petitioned the abbassid khalif, then residing at the Mamluk court at Cairo, to be allowed to use this same title (p. 47). Moreover, five years later, just before the battle of Ankara, where all dreams and ambitions of the Ottomans were dashed to the ground by Tamerlane, under the heading "The Empire of Bayazid in 1402" Mr. Vatin refers to the Ottoman ruler as a simple emir, not even a sultan and even less an emperor. So, we wonder as to what an ordinary reader can do with all this disjointed and undocumented information. For our part, from a Greek chronicle about the Ottomans, we learn that the first sovereign of that dynasty to use the title of sultan was Mehmed I, who reigned from 1413 to 1421, but without a rival only after 1416³.

Another question which deserves a few words at this point is that which is connected with the so-called ghazi spirit, which so often creeps up in the first chapters of most manuals dealing with the early phases of Ottoman history. Mrs Beldiceanu candidly admits that this rather simplistic view hardly corresponds to historical facts which she herself had analyzed and evaluated in her previous publications. Mr. Vatin takes up the same question and, referring to the transitional period between the reigns of Orkhan and Murad, conveys the idea that the most aggressive elements of the pirate emirates of Western Asia Minor were at a loss of purpose when they were deprived by the Ottomans of immediate contact with territories under Greek control. On the other hand, the Ottomans themselves, who had by now assumed the leadership of most muslim armed bands and led them into the mainly Greek inhabited and then into Balkan Christian lands, this had the effect of draining the other Turkish emirates of their most dynamic and booty-starved element that Turkish Anatolia had to offer at the time.

Mr. Vatin, who had at his disposal the necessary information in order to present correctly this question permits himself to be drawn into the quagmire of the well-known Turkish mythology concerning the role of the so called ghazi warriors, who could not be more motivated by religion than those who preceded them by two or three generations and about whose motives Mrs. Beldiceanu could be no less categoric. Here, the fact that the Ottoman military machine was running mainly on the booty motive is almost completely missed.

3. Zoras G. Th., *Χρονικόν περί των Τούρκων Σουλτάνων* (Chronicle about the Turkish Sultans), Athens, 1958, p. 55.

Indeed, one can wonder as to the kind of a holy war the son of a Christian woman could lead when he was fighting other fellow-Muslims, Alaedin of Karaman for example, at the head of Greek and Serbian troops who were still Christians in faith. In our view, it would have been much closer to the truth to say that the so-called "holy warrior spirit" was mostly what it had been since the advent of Islam and much before the Turkish factor comes to the forefront of Greek history: a moral justification for plunder on non-Muslims, keeping up a permanent war for booty and slaves from non-Muslim lands and peoples. Without this motive we can hardly imagine the Ottomans crossing the Dardanelles and embarking upon an adventure which ended up in the creation of a new state of gigantic proportions. All this is not evident in Mr. Vatin's text.

We cannot leave this author's two chapter contribution without taking note of his unfortunate tendency to invent situations or even to garnish his text with sweeping statements and half-truths. On p. 49, for example, he tells us that, in the Spring of 1392, the Ottomans planned to attack the city and port of Sinope by sea and prepared a fleet to that effect but that the attack never materialized. What is not said is that Sinope belonged then to the Djan-darli family of Kastamonu, that the command of the fleet—whatever "fleet" the Ottomans might have had at the time—was entrusted in the hands of the Byzantine emperor himself and it is perhaps because of this aborted expedition that relations between Greeks and Ottomans deteriorated rapidly after this incident⁴. We can point out another half-truth on p. 52, where mention is made of Boucicaut's raids on Ottoman-held but Greek populated areas around the Straits. It is not mentioned here, or anywhere else in these essays, that a few years before, this important representative of French nobility had offered his services to the Ottoman sultan who turned him down. Moreover, the number of men who participated in Boucicaut's expedition is inflated by four hundred⁵.

On p. 54, a sweeping statement puts, by the end of the year 1401, under effective Ottoman control all of Asia Minor, "from the Aegean to the Euphrates". Since exception is made only for the port cities of Trebizond, Sinope and Smyrna, the reader is left with the impression that the Ottomans

4. Vasiliev A. A., *History of the Byzantine Empire*, Madison, Ill., 1964, pp. 629-630. Also, Barker J. W., *Manuel Palaeologus, 1391-1424. A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship*, Putgers U.P., 1964, p. 104.

5. Roman d'Amat, "Boucicaut", in *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, vol. 6 (Paris, 1954), Cols. 1245-6.

had under their control all the coast-line, which was not the case. The full truth would be to say that, in addition to the Genoese colony of Phocaea on the Aegean and of Amastris on the Black Sea, which was to be conquered by Mehmed II in 1459, as the author will state himself later on (p. 94), the entire length of the coastline east of Kerasous (Giresun) was not in Ottoman hands, nor were the coasts of Cilicia east of Kalonoros (Alaiye), which belonged then to the Egyptian Mameluks⁶.

On pages 53 and 54, where Tamerlane is presented both as a Mongol and as a Turk, Sultan Bayzid I is supposed to have been a better general by letting his opponent enter his territory, far away from his asiatic bases of supply, in order to attack him on his own ground. This might have been very intelligent strategy—it reminds general Souvorov anyway—, if indeed that was the way Bayazid's mind was working at the time. In fact, it seems that Tamerlane was the better tactician of the two since, before coming to grips with the Ottomans, he turned south and dealt a death-blow to the Mamelukes in Syria, devastating Upper Mesopotamia in the process at the same time. He thus assured his left flank when, two years later, he came to attack the territories of the Ottoman Sultan. We simply cannot see upon what ground the author stands to make his assertion about Bayazid's superior military tactics in his engagement with Tamerlane.

On p. 55 we are told that in 1401, when informed about the imminent invasion of Anatolia by Tamerlane, Venice broke off negotiations with Bayazid, created an anti-Ottoman league, and made preparations to attack the Ottoman naval base at Gallipoli. We are even told that the fleets of Byzantium, of the Genoese of Galata and of Trebizond were preparing to support Tamerlane, who represented their last hope. But then we hear no more about the supposed fleets of Byzantium and of Trebizond, whereas on p. 57, without further explanation, we read about the help offered by both Venetians and Genoese to the defeated remnants of the Ottoman army to cross over to safety on European soil. The disaster of the Ottomans at Ankara is dismissed as a "palace revolution" (p. 56), whereas the city of Brusa is presented as being still the capital of the Ottomans, something which goes against all that we know and which is also contradicted by another contributor in this same book on p. 702.

Of course, anyone who knows some Ottoman history is aware of the fact that at that time the Sultan's general HQs during winter constituted in

6. See map No. XI in R.E. Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire*, Leiden, 1972.

effect the seat of the Ottoman government. But for the last few decades, just before the events described at this point, this seat of power was to be found on European soil and more specifically at the city of Adrianople, which is considered as the second Ottoman capital after Brusa. What is missing here is something about the role played by Adrianople during the last years of the reign of Murad I and for the entire period of sultan Bayazid I as well. After all, it is there, in this city, that the emirate transformed itself into a sultanate and it is from there that it marched into the roads leading to Empire.

On p. 67 we are told that upon the death of sultan Mehmed I, on May 21, 1421, one of his four sons, Murad, was called upon by the acting grand visier to come in all urgency to Adrianople in order to take over the government. We are also told that Mustafa, one of Murad's three brothers, was "executed" two years later when he fell into his brother's hands. However, we are left in the dark as to the fate of Yusuf and Mahmud whom their father, from his deathbed, wished to place under protective custody with his old friend, emperor Manuel II Palaeologos. Perhaps, at this juncture, it would be a good place to say a few words about the system of fratricide which, since the accession of Bayazid I on the plain of Kosovo in 1389, became a common practice of all newly-proclaimed Ottoman Sultans.

On the same page and in the same sentence we read that at that time the grand visier was Yakhchioglou Djelaleddin Bayezid, executed shortly afterwards on orders from the new sultan, who replaced him by Djandarli Ibrahim pasha. However, we know from F. Giese⁷ that Ibrahim was already grand visier at the time of the death of Mehmed I and J. H. Kramers⁸, for his part, informs us that at that time the grand visier was Iwad pasha. As it is not possible to have three grand visiers at the same time, we may be dealing with three different Ottoman officials holding simultaneously the post of first, or grand, visier, of second and of third: we just do not know what to make out of this conflicting information.

On p. 77 we read that Ladislás, the king of Hungary, was killed at the battle of Varna on the 10th of November 1444. However, on the next page, we read that, five years later, the prince of Wallachia, a protégé of the Ottomans, was at war with this same Ladislás, at least if we are to judge from the index on p. 766. In fact, here we have to do with a successor to Ladislás Jagiello, a posthumous son of emperor Albert II of Habsburg, whose name was also Ladislás and who was chosen by the Hungarian nobility to become

7. "Cenderli", in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1987 reprint of the first edition, vol. 2, p. 834.

8. "Murad II", *ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 728.

king of Hungary (1444-1457). We are obviously dealing here with a case of mistaken identity.

On p. 83 we read that, after his accession to the throne on February 18th, 1451, young Mehmed II was happy to declare his peaceful intentions to Constantine XI Palaeologos, coupling his declaration with the payment of 300.000 aspres, which represented the annual allowance for the upkeep of his cousin Orkhan, then living in Constantinople, presumably in protective custody. After presenting the new Ottoman ruler dealing rather successfully with the first problems of his reign, Mr. Vatin seems to take sides when, on the next page, he refers to prince Orkhan's unpaid "ransom money" in justification of the sultan's new offensive policy.

We shall be confronted again and again with a fluctuating vocabulary when an annual pension becomes a tribute, or even ransom money, according to new circumstances (pp. 101, 106 and 107). Moreover, here too, the reader will have a problem of identification, though slightly different from that of the two Ladislases of Hungary. On p. 770, in the index, this "pretender" Orkhan is presented as a different person from that of the son of Suleyman Tchelebi who, though blinded by Mehmed II's father (p. 62), was still around by 1444 (p. 77). It is not clear to this reader who was this Orkhan whose person created tension between Greeks and Ottomans in 1452, was taken prisoner by the sultan after the fall of Constantinople and was executed on May 30th, 1453 (p. 88).

On p. 85, where the author presents the sultan's preparations for the last siege of the Greek capital, we are given some detailed information as to the numbers of ships and men defending it. Though we are supposed to be reading Ottoman history, we are surprised not to find any reference as to the numbers of men, canon and ships at the disposal of Mehmed II. Since all these are readily available in most manuals of general history and since they are considered important, at least for the sake of comparison if not as an explanation for the Ottoman victory, we wonder why they were omitted. After all, we are dealing here with a milestone in Greek, Ottoman and World history as well.

On p. 88, the author reveals the spirit which guides his methodology. Soon after the entrance of the victorious Ottomans in Constantinople, murdering, enslaving, raping and ransacking for three days—which is left unsaid—we are told that though the *megas dux* Lucas Notaras was "executed"—not murdered—the rest of the Byzantine aristocracy—no names given—was not mistreated because their children were lucky enough to be drafted—not kidnapped—to be raised as Janissaries: this was a golden

opportunity for them to start an excellent career (*une belle carrière*). Since this same suggestion is presented again by another contributor later on in this same book (p. 136), it is difficult for us to decide where to attribute the paternity of this proposition. Anyway, here we have to do with fiction rather than with history, unless some new sources about the *Devshirme* did not yet come to our attention.

On p. 97, where the author presents some aspects of the long turco-venetian war of 1463-1479, we are told that during the Spring of 1466 the Venetians conquered —not said from whom— the islands of Imvros, Samothrace and Thasos. Then, on the next page, we read that the first of these islands was conquered again during the summer of 1469 —again not said from whom— while the Venetians raided Thessalonique, New Phocaea and the island [sic] of Enos. However, on p. 101, where the author speaks at some length about the terms of the peace treaty of 1479 there is no mention at all of anyone of these three islands and the unsuspecting reader may be left with the impression that they remained in Venetian hands, which was not the case.

On p. 101, we are given some details about the terms of the peace treaty contracted between the Ottomans and the Venetians on January 25th, 1479. Among the terms of this treaty a stipulation provides that Venice would pay to the sultan a sum of 10.000 ducats annually in exchange for the freedom of commerce within the boundaries of the Ottoman State. However, shortly afterwards, when this treaty was renewed upon the accession to the throne of sultan Bayazid II (1482), this same sum is treated as a tribute, which makes the Republic of St. Mark a tributary state of the Ottomans for the period 1479-1482. The same fluctuation in terminology prevails when the author describes the relations between the Ottomans on one side and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (Rhodes) and the Pope on the other, when Bayazid's brother, Djem, was in their hands. By the same reasoning, since the Ottomans were paying an annual sum to the Knights, or to the Pope, for the upkeep of Djem (p. 107), they must have been their tributaries. This, of course, was not the case.

On p. 102, where there is question about the Ottoman combined land and naval operations against the despot of Artá, who was also the lord of the islands of Leucada, Cephalonia and Zakynthos, we are told that, presumably at the end of the war, the Ottomans handed over to the Venetians the last of these islands as a price for their benevolent neutrality. However, when we go to consult other authorities on this question⁹, we realize what the facts are

9. Miller W., *The Latins in the Levant. - A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)*,

somewhat different: it seems that the Venetians came to Zakynthos, landed and occupied it before the Ottomans had the time to show up. When the Ottomans came, they were permitted to plunder it, after which they abandoned it to the Venetians who kept it until 1503, when they surrendered it to them (p. 133). All this may sound somewhat complicated, but we cannot deform history by oversimplifying it.

On p. 105 we read about the "possibility" of Mehmed II's death by poisoning, perpetrated supposedly through the initiative of his elder son and successor Bayazid II who, again supposedly, in carrying out this parricide and regicide collaborated with the *Halveti* [sic] dervishes who had a grudge against the sultan for the land reforms he made against the *Wakf*. Well, in a book of general consultation, as in this one, there must be no room for unsubstantiated innuendo: there is no point in repeating rumor of which Ottoman historiography may contain more than it can hold. Franz Babinger, who is a recognized authority on the question, does not fall into this kind of a trap. As to the *Halveti* dervishes, we find no clue in the glossary concerning their identity, but we suspect the author is referring to the *Alevis*, who are well-known in Turkish historiography but rather neglected in this book. Mr. Vatin speaks of them at length under the name of *Kizilbach*, but makes no connection of them with his *Halveti* (pp. 113-5). For his part, Mr. L. Bazin, at the very end of the book, presents the *Alevis* correctly as a popular religious sect of Eastern Anatolia having connections in Shiite Iran (p. 710).

On this same page (105) we read that "the grand visier Ishak pasha, enemy of the grand-visier" Karamani Mehmed pasha, etc., which brings us back again to a familiar problem¹⁰. We repeat: since in the Ottoman polity two grand visiers holding the same post simultaneously would be as impossible as having two sultans reigning at the same time in the same palace, it would be much better to qualify one of the two grand visiers as "former" or "second" or "third", as the case might have been. Anyway, in so far as we know, Karamani Mehmed occupied his post continuously from 1478 until May 4, 1481¹¹.

Finally, in concluding the third chapter with the civil war of 1511-1512, which ended up by breaking down the Sultan's authority and by forcing him

Cambridge reprint 1964, p. 486 and Babinger F., *Mahomet II le Conquerant et son temps, 1432-1481*, tr. by H. E. Del Medico, Paris, 1954, p. 384.

10. *Supra*, p. 334.

11. Babinger F., "Karamani Mehmed pasha", in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1987 reprint of the first edition, vol. 4, pp. 745-6.

to cede the reins of power to his notorious son and successor, the reader is left again in the dark as to the fate of Selim's three brothers and potential rivals to the throne. In fact, we have to wait until p. 139 to learn from another contributor that by the time Selim took over the government, all three were alive and well but even then we know what happened to only one of the three, Ahmed: the fate of the other two is not mentioned anywhere.

The fourth chapter, pp. 117-138, has as a title "The organization of the Ottoman Empire, 14th, 15th centuries". It is the contribution of Mr. Nicoara Beldiceanu, also a member of the C.N.R.S. and lecturer to the Fourth Section of the prestigious Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Besides being the director of the review *Turcica*, a platform for the publication of analytical work carried out in France, this author is a punctilious researcher and a prolific writer of numerous articles and books, mostly grown out articles, almost all of them dealing with a particular aspect of the early conquests, organization and Ottoman administration of the non-Greek area of the Balkan Peninsula from about the end of the 14th century to early 16th.

In reading this chapter one could not but have a confirmation of the fundamental historical fact that the Ottoman state and society saw the light of the day in the heart of the Greek world. Before reaching deeply into the interior of the two peninsulas, the Balkan and the Anatolian, the Ottomans had already gained much of their strength and material resources first and foremost from a mainly Greek inhabited area, something which is not always made evident. And yet, whereas Turks and other Balkan Christians are often properly identified with their ethnic names, the Greeks are usually qualified by the authors of these essays with such colorless names as Infidels, Christians, or Byzantines, whereas the word "Greek" is used only when it cannot be avoided. Moreover, some authors, including Mr. Beldiceanu, in their eagerness to bring the Ottomans closer to European models, do not hesitate to use such words as "empereur", "oratoire" and "monastère", where the most appropriate vocabulary would have been "sultan", "mosk", or even *zaviyé*, since Ottoman terminology carries a preference.

But this having been said, we must admit that when we pass from the previous contributor to the one at hand, we come from one extreme to another in methodological rigor, over-all purpose and style as well, which shows again why such collective endeavors are condemned to lack unity and to remain in fact collections of essays, each with its own particular characteristics. Indeed, here we have not only a degree of precision which we would expect to find in a dictionary for special terms, or even in a commented glossary, but also new and interesting information in the form of facts, figures and detail

which go far beyond the announced aims of this book: rarely will the author be tempted to present a new fact without first specifying, or explaining, its very essence.

However, here and there the reader will have to tread a ground strewn with unsubstantiated allegation. On p. 131, for exemple, the author states that Christian population was not the only one to feed the Janissary corps with recruits and then we are left up in the air: given the period of reference of this particular contribution, one can hardly follow. Then, on p. 136, we read for the second time in this book that the abduction of Christian boys was not always resented by the victims since it opened up promising careers for them¹². Again, whereas this allegation must sound logical enough and some exceptional cases—which we ignore—may be even found in support of it, because of the importance of its implications, it has to be substantiated by reference to the sources.

Some contradictions, too, mar the essay. On p. 120 for example, we are told that a *sandjak* is a province of the Ottoman State, but in the glossary, on p. 753, we read that it is a subdivision of a province. On p. 121 we are given the year 1324 as being the first year of Orkhan's reign, whereas Mrs Beldiceanu herself took some pain in explaining, on p. 20, that the exact date, or even year, of this accession to power is uncertain. This is also noted on the list of Ottoman Sultans on p. 733.

Except for these blemishes, Mr Beldiceanu's contribution is up to the standards he set up for himself in his previous publications from which he borrows heavily. Generally well-documented, extremety analytical, descriptive and down-to earth in economic, social, administrative, urban, rural, even military history of the area and period he knows best, he seems to leave to others the task of interpreting the meaning of all this rich information with which he serves the reader in this dense essay.

Mr. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont, whose credentials are as impressive as any—Research Director of the C.N.R.S., Director of the French Institute of Anatolian Studies in Constantinople and much more—, is the author of the fifth chapter, dealing with the years 1512-1606, which he calls the period of the apogee of the Empire, pp. 139-158. He is interested in political events, which are in fact mostly military¹³. His assured, direct, brisk and lapidary style reveals a well-documented scholar as well as a talented writer of history

12. *Supra*, p. 335-6.

13. His doctoral dissertation, published in 1987 at Constantinople, is an analysis of the relations between Ottomans and Persians during the ten-year period, from 1514 to 1524.

who knows perfectly well his facts, decides which ones we deserve to know and delivers them in a way in which will not find us always in full agreement.

Right from the beginning of this essay, the reader has a feeling that he is going to be left with his hunger for facts which shall be omitted, or even deformed. In fact, he may be astounded in reading Mr. Bacqué-Grammont's apologies for Selim the Grim's reign (1512-1520), since these go against the grain of both contemporary testimony and traditional historiography. Personal sympathies aside, one simply cannot transform by the stroke of the pen, no matter how talented this pen may be, a ruthless tyrant into a hero, or a saint. As we know, terror through massacre was a favorite weapon at the hands of Ottoman sultans in their application of both domestic and foreign policy and they used it freely against those whom they considered to be their enemies.

Sultan Selim I, who initiated his reign by putting to death his own brothers, their progeny, attendants and partisans, was not the type of person who would hesitate for a moment to commit murder on a grand scale. Though he obtained from the *Sheikh ul Islam* a *fetwa* permitting him to put to the sword the Kizilbach population of Eastern Anatolia (p. 142), the fact remains that he committed mass murder, or genocide as we would say in our days. We find it, therefore, difficult to follow the author when he dismisses these massacres of the Shiite population of Eastern Asia Minor as a simple legend (p. 141), but a legend which he himself explodes when, a couple of pages further down, he writes about Selim's treatment of his prisoners of war after the battle of Tchaldiran (August 23, 1514): they were all put to the sword. This bloody despot frequently punched his visiers with his own hands and sent a-flying the heads of other unspecified dignitaries (p. 141) who, as it becomes clear five pages further down, were no other than the sultan's grand visiers themselves¹⁴.

Moreover, the well-informed reader will be taken somewhat aback in discovering some other discrepancies and some errors of fact as well. For example, on p. 146, he will read of Selim's famous grand visier Piri Mehmed pasha occupying his post a full year later than the date advanced by other authorities¹⁵. On p. 152, where reference is made on the reign and campaigns

14. From what we know, in the Ottoman system, the grand visiers were not decapitated: they were supposed to be strangled with the string of a bow, as the old Turkish custom required.

15. Babinger F., "Piri Mehmed pasha", in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1987 reprint of original edition, vol. 6, p. 1069; confirmed by M. A. Simsar, *The Vakfiya of Ahmed pasha*, Philadelphia, 1940, p. 195.

of Suleyman the Magnificent, it is a whole century too early to talk about the Ottoman conquest of the island of Crete. On this same page and on the next as well the reader will be presented with the same piece of information in two different ways as if two different sets of events were in question: the territory which is to be found between the river Pruth and the mouth of the Dnieper and which is annexed by the Ottomans in 1536 (p. 156) is presented as different from that which lies between Moldavia and the Crimea, which was supposed to have been annexed in 1538 (p. 153).

What will any reader understand about Sultan Suleyman's motives in declaring war against the Iranians in 1548, when reading that the Sultan "had neither more nor less than the usual motives in undertaking a military expedition ~~against~~ the Safavides"? (p. 154). Finally why a different version as to the real causes of the death of princes Musrafa and Djihângir from that advanced by the next contributor a few pages further down (p. 159), and why the fluctuation in terminology on that matter by the next author? (p. 178).

Mr. Gilles Veinstein is the fifth contributor to this collective effort, covering in 67 pages the same period as did his immediate predecessor in twenty-one but looking from a different perspective to other series of events. There is at hand a great amount of detail, which is not the case in the previous chapters, but this is also to be expected from this sort of team work. If the other members of the group were to write as extensively as Mr. Veinstein, this book would have easily reached eleven hundred pages and our own account of it would have been much more difficult.

This author's panoply of credentials is as formidable as any: Director of research at the School of Higher Studies in the Social Sciences, Director of the Center for the Study of the U.S.S.R., of Eastern Europe and of the Turkish Area, Director again of the Unit for Research on the History of Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the C.N.R.S., and perhaps even more. A general idea of his field of interest is furnished by the above-mentioned posts of responsibility but also by a glimpse at some of his previous publications which appear in the bibliography of this book on p. 741. He would probably classify himself as a specialist of the sixteenth century and that is exactly where his topic is situated.

On p. 171 this author states that the Jews of the Ottoman Empire were exempted from the *devshirme*, "undoubtedly" he writes, because they were of urban background. It is, of course, well-known that the Jewish nation was not subjected to this odious human tribute but the reasons for it must have been other than those which are advanced here. In the first place, during the fifteenth century, we have a great number of well documented cases of

this kind of massive kidnapping, involving Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, even Genoese boys of urban background, especially after the capture of a city. So, the urban background did not seem to have bothered much the Ottoman recruiters.

We suspect that the real reason for not subjecting the Jewish community to this sort of tribute might have been of another kind. In the first place, when this institution took form, one of its real purposes was to weaken the demographical potential of the conquered Christian peoples of the Balkans, while using their young boys in fighting other Christians, the greatest enemies of the Ottomans. As for the Jews, especially during the formative period of this ruling institution, they were very few, came from a nation which was forbidden to carry arms in both Christian and Muslim societies, and were eager to be accepted by the conquerors to whom they presented no particular problems.

On the following page (172), in reference to the number of children involved in the child-gathering forays of the Ottoman recruiters, we read, "undoubtedly" again, that they occurred "every three or seven years", according to the needs of the government and netted something like one to three thousand children: wrong again, both for the lapses of time between the recruitments and the numbers of children taken away from their parents. For all that we know¹⁶, the recruitment was much more frequent than the author wants us to believe and involved greater numbers of children. In times of war—and the Ottomans as we know were on a permanent state of war—the losses of the Janissaries and of the other officials, who came from this same institution, were rather high and had to be replaced frequently. Though impossible to estimate for any given year during the sixteenth century, they must have been greater in numbers than what is suggested by Mr. Veinstein: one has to take into account the fact that many unscrupulous recruiters took away more children than they were authorized and this in order to account for those who would escape, or die, or even be sold to slavery for cash, while on the way to the capital.

On p. 175, the author makes himself the advocate of the Ottoman system of social injustice and defends the practice of arbitrary confiscations which, according to him, aimed mostly at dishonest agents of the government who grew too rich too fast. This is an enormous question which cannot be dismissed

16. Mordtmann J. H., "Dewshirme", in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1987 reprint of the original edition, vol. 1, p. 952, and Ménage V. L., "Devshirmé", *Encyclopedie de l'Islam*, New ed., Brill, vol. 2 (1965), p. 218.

in a simple statement because here we have in a nutshell one of the main reasons for the general lack of progress and overall economic underdevelopment in all countries and peoples who happened to have lived under Ottoman control. To be sure, we are talking here of the systematic plundering, on the most whimsical pretext, especially when the sultan was in urgent need of cash, of all those who were successful in business as well as those who became prosperous while on some high government post. Since lack of security for property was closely associated with insecurity of life, this inevitably had a paralyzing effect upon capital formation and economic progress in general.

On the same page, in the same apologetic tone, and against everything we know from numerous first-hand sources, Mr. Veinstein wants us to believe that all we have learned from West European observers about the nature of the Sultan's power, about the lack of protection of his Christian subjects and about the employment of slaves in sixteenth century Ottoman government has been grossly exaggerated. To make such an assertion and leave it there without proving anything does not in fact make any sense: to prove wrong all sources with the stroke of the pen, without offering the slightest proof in support of such a statement, does not even merit discussion.

On p. 176 we are told that the reason for which Sultan Mehmed II abandoned his first permanent residence in Constantinople for a new, which came to be known as the New Palace, built after 1465 at the extreme eastern end of the triangle of the city, was because this last emplacement was easy to defend. In fact this explanation does not stand up to common sense. Even if we were to accept, for the argument's sake, that the Sultan chose a new site which would be better defended, the next question which comes to the mind is: against whom? Now, anyone who knows anything about the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror at that time also knows that he feared no one, at least on land and in his own capital at that. In fact, he soon passed on the offensive on both land and sea in far away places: his armies were marching against the Hungarians while his fleets put on the defensive both Genoese and Venetians, the two greatest naval powers of the time. Anyway, the words "defense" and "defensive" were hardly ever in the mind of Mehmed II, the conquering sultan.

On p. 185 the author states that the notorious pirate Khayreddin Barbarossa, promoted in 1533 by Suleyman the Magnificent to the rank of commander-in-chief of the Ottoman navy (*Kapudan pasha*), sat at the regular deliberations of the Council of State (*Divan*), presumably when he was in the capital and as an observer: on p. 120, Mr. N. Beldiceanu has told us that the *Kapudan pasha* became a member of the *Divan* only during the second

half of the sixteenth century, i.e. after the death of Barbarossa. Perhaps an explanation would be necessary at this point.

Absentmindedness on the part of the author, or careless proofreading, or both, permitted a mistake to stand so as to make a sentence meaningless: this is on p. 194 in reference to the manipulations of the Ottoman monetary system to the profit of the government by juggling with two calendars, one for the receipts and another for the expenses, the one Christian, the other Muslim, but both solar!

A completely unfounded generalization made of half-truths, which are usually to be found in some Turkish historical writing, underlines the authenticity of the timariot system of land holding, conditional upon service to the State. Ignoring the works of G. Ostrogorsky and many other well-known Byzantinists on the question of the *proniae*, Mr. Veinstein prefers to refer vaguely to a certain "islamic heritage" on this matter. But then, ten pages further down, on p. 207, he unwittingly contradicts himself by stating that the timariot system was in fact introduced in Syria and Mesopotamia by the Ottomans, i.e. after their conquest and annexation by Selim the Grim. Presumably, then, this so-called "islamic heritage" came to those provinces with the Ottomans. It is well-known, of course, that the timariot system was based upon Byzantine prototypes and whatever differences there were in it under the Ottomans during the sixteenth century, these must have been normal adaptations made to it as time went by and as new needs arose.

Our last remarks on the ascendance of the timariot system to the Byzantine *proniae* brings to mind a fundamental weakness of Turkish studies, as they are pursued both in Turkey and in France, with no reference at all to the Byzantine ingredients which, at least during the first phase, went into the building of Ottoman State, society, economy, even art. On page 201, unsatisfactory and simplistic is the rendering of the Turkish word *akindji* as a colorless "coursier", or *runner*, who, in the glossary is presented as a *scout*, or "soldat des troupes de pointe" (p. 751). Both Cl. Huart and A. Decei, who contributed the two documented articles on the *Akindji* in the first and second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, could be of much help in furnishing a better definition. Lord Eversley and R. B. Merriman, referring to the behavior of the *Akindjis* during the early years of the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent make these "runners" quite dangerous: "Irregular cavalry, called *Scorchers*, depending on loot for their food and pay", writes the first¹⁷.

17. Eversley Lord, *The Turkish Empire*, London, 1918, p. 121.

"Certainly a wilder troop than a marauding band of ravaging *Akindji* would be difficult to imagine", writes the other¹⁸.

The laxity with which Ottoman terminology is treated by some of the contributors to this volume creates uncertainty and confusion to the average reader. In Mr. Veinstein's essay for example, in some others and in the glossary as well, one may come to think of the *kharatch* tax as a capitation tax levied annually upon the non-Muslim subjects of the sultan (pp. 164 and 752). But then, on p. 208, in reference to the annual tribute which certain vassal principalities, such as Moldavia and Wallachia, were paying to the sultan's treasury in lump sums as a sign of their submission, the author qualifies it also as *kharatch*. Then, in another chapter, covering a later period, this same contribution is qualified as *kharadj gūzar*, with no further explanation (p. 289). And, again, in reference to the annual contribution which the province of Egypt was making to the Ottoman treasury in the sixteenth century, another contributor calls it a tribute. We still think that the general reader deserves some clarifications on this question.

On p. 209, Mr. Veinstein's credibility is again put to test when he states that the Ottoman judicial system permitted a Christian plaintiff to present his case to the local *cadi*, when the accused was a Muslim, which is correct as a statement goes. However, for the uninitiated, the most important aspect of such a case is omitted, namely, the well-established fact that the testimony of a Christian against a Muslim is not admitted in a Muslim court. Since this is not evoked by any contributor in this book, it would be useful to remember that in the Ottoman state and society, which are presented to us, we have a fundamental inequality of two religious groups, the one dominating and exploiting the other, and this inequality which is based upon religious law transcends all institutions and constitutes a permanent source of exploitation: No verbal juggling can change a hard historical reality such as this.

On p. 175, the author already presented the despotism of the Ottoman sultans under a favorable light, without proving, or justifying, anything. Moreover, on p. 210, this same despotism comes close to becoming enlightened, thus anticipating the well-known West European enlightened monarchs by almost two centuries: he wants to tell us, against all proof, that the Ottoman yoke upon the Balkan Christians, and especially upon the Greeks, was not so bad after all. To that effect, he marshalls Belon du Mans' testimony

18. Merriman R. B., *Suleiman the Magnificent, 1520-1566*, Cambridge, Mass., 1944, p. 147.

of a Greek peasant from Lemnos who supposedly told him how happy he was under Ottoman administration¹⁹. Here again, though apparently true, what is said may be of less importance than that which is left unsaid. In the first place the island of Lemnos during the sixteenth century was better protected by the Ottoman fleet from Latin pirates, whereas before falling under Ottoman control it was often visited by pirates coming from everywhere. Finally, in Belon Du Man's time, few ethnic Turks ventured to establish themselves on Lemnos and in most of the other islands of the Aegean as well and this might go far enough in justifying the Greek peasant's disposition.

And now a word about the state of the population in the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth century, as presented in the essay under scrutiny here. It is well known that the very tentative calculations, based upon the fragmentary information published by the Turkish historian O. L. Barkan, taken over and used by F. Braudel, were consciously or uncsciously abused by younger historians with the result that what had started as a methodological exercise ended up as a proven fact. Mr. Barkan's figures for 1520, for example, or even his methods of computing, arbitrary as they were, did in no way permit anyone to go so far away in generalization, the more so since we are dealing with a pre-industrial society in a pre-statistical period. Therefore, to claim, as the author does, that the population of the Ottoman Empire grew by 41% from 1520 to 1580, without explaining from what figure to what, is much easier said than proved: it proves nothing.

Despite all the weak points which came to our attention, it must be said in conclusion that this is a chapter to be read with profit. The various factors which kept the Ottoman system of government operating and which ended up by bringing it to a halt have been presented at times subjectively, it has been pointed out, but in general positively and realistically. Finally, Mr. Veinstein's concluding remarks on the predatory nature of the Ottoman state of the period he is referring to are well to the point.

The next two chapters were written by R. Mantran, who is also the editor and the main mover for this collective effort. Well-known in France for his various publications on the Ottomans, we may call him the dean of the French "Ottomanists". Having spent several years with the French School at Constantinople, he returned to his country to teach Ottoman history at the University of Aix en Provence, then to lecture at the Institute of Eastern Languages and Civilization in Paris and finally to serve as president of the Committee

19. Steven Runciman speaks of Below Du Mans as a "disgruntled Catholic traveler who disliked Greeks" (*The Great Church in Captivity*, Cambridge, 1968, p. 389).

for the Advancement of Turkish Studies, a post which he obviously held when this book was put together.

The first of the two chapters, or the seventh in this book (pp. 227-264) bears the title: "The Ottoman Empire in the Seventeenth Century: Stabilization or Decline?", a question to which the reader must expect a clear answer. The answer does not come in this chapter but in the next, on p. 285, and it appears that Mr. Mantran does not like to use the word "decline". He prefers to use the word "stabilization" instead. From the opening paragraphs it becomes clear that his rhetorical question is out of place since both choice of facts and phraseology point to the traditional interpretation, i.e. that during the seventeenth century the Ottoman establishment had entered into a period of irreversible decline, something the author is reluctant to acknowledge, even in the face of proof offered by himself. And yet two other collaborators, those who contributed the ninth and tenth chapter, will have no doubts about it, the first of the two even tracing the origins of this decline to the second half of the sixteenth century (p. 300), with which we fully agree. Indeed, Mr. Mantran's personal inhibitions seem to have prevented him from making any connection between the various manifestations which prepared the way to the decline such as the degradation of the old system of recruitment for the ruling institution, for example, and the decline itself.

Mostly a rehash of information first presented by the author in his doctoral dissertation, this is a summary presentation of the main political, military and economic facts concerning the Ottomans during the seventeenth century: apparently, the Christian subjects of the Sultan have no place in this type of history and are left out of it. And then there are some minor blemishes due to carelessness. On pp. 232-3, for example, in presenting the circumstances surrounding the rise and fall of sultan Osman II (1618-1622), the author claims that for the first time in Ottoman history a sultan became the victim of an armed rebellion. He obviously is not taking into consideration what another member of his own team had written, on p. 116, concerning the circumstances surrounding the deposition and ultimate death of Bayazid II in the year 1512.

Though general editor of this volume, Mr. Mantran's own contribution could have received more careful editing in order to avoid some repetitions. For example, there was no need to blame the Janissaries twice, on p. 240 and again on p. 257, for letting their own discipline deteriorate and their military effectiveness diminish, nor was it necessary to mention twice the visits of a Russian ambassador at the sultan's court in 1640, 1666 and 1668 (pp. 245

and 256), while ignoring altogether the visit of 1616-7²⁰.

On p. 242 the author refers to the great fire of July 1660, which reportedly destroyed twenty eight thousand houses and three hundred "palaces" in the Ottoman capital: we all, of course, know that only the sultan had a real palace at Constantinople, whereas some of his most important dignitaries could not aspire to inhabit very luxurious, or spacious, mansions which could in the end cause their own death by provoking the jealousy of their master. By "palace" Mr. Mantran probably means "konak", which evokes a more modest building in the Turkish language. Carelessness, too, must be the reason for placing the port-city of Azov both on the Crimea and on the shores of the Black Sea (pp. 249 and 250).

The eighth chapter is entitled "The Ottoman State during the Eighteenth Century and the Pressure of Europe". The author gives here a good, dense summary of economic and political events in twenty-one pages of text, which must be compared to the next chapter which covers a good part of the same period and some of the same ground but which is two and half times as long. As we have noted elsewhere, this kind of overlapping and imbalance is not unusual in this book. There is little to be said here except by way of an objection for the use of the word "ottoman" to qualify the Greek and other Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire (pp. 283 and 284). Surely, M. Mantran cannot ignore the fact that that state fell mostly because its ruling institution refused to admit in its ranks all social classes and religions into an organic whole based on equality and social justice, something which must, eventually, become a central theme in Ottoman history.

The ninth chapter (pp. 286-340) is the second contribution by Mr. Veinstein, who starts out here with a declaration of intent to correct the unduly harsh perception many Balkan historians have about the Ottoman experience of their respective nationalities. In line with the editor's policy, he wants us to believe that the various "turcocratiae" were presented in the past in too dark colors and this he wants to correct. As a matter of fact, in reading this chapter we find neither the announced "nuances", nor any novel theses overturning the so-called "traditional" national Balkan historiographies. If anything, the author changes nothing when he treats, for instance, Hungary under the Ottomans (pp. 291-2). Nor shall we see anything in this chapter which constitutes a departure from traditional Balkan historiography as we know it. In fact, in order to write this chapter Mr. Veinstein seems to have relied on the findings of these very historians he was supposed to correct.

20. Solowieff S., *Histoire de la Russie*, Paris, 1879, pp. 306-7.

As expected, there is again some overlapping with the subject-matter already covered, albeit more summarily, by both N. Beldiceanu and R. Mantran, and some new information which we had no way of checking because of the absence of references to the sources. The author is supposed to present us with the history of "The Balkan Provinces of the Ottoman Empire from 1606 to 1774". On p. 287 we are given a novel definition of the Balkan Peninsula as being the territories to be found south of the Danube, the Sava and the Kupa line. However, the author proceeds to cover much more ground than the title of this chapter suggests: Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, even the Crimea, which is not bad but which makes his title and definitions somewhat misrepresentative of the content. In fact, Mr. Veinsfein covers an area almost twice in size as that suggested by his own title.

Seven excellent pages on the Danubian Principalities (pp. 306-311), make us more tolerant of some uncorrected misspellings: Skanderberg, instead of Skanderbeg (p. 294) and Szivatorok instead of Sztivatorok (p. 301). Or of some errors of fact: Demetrios Cantemir could not have been so important as a founder of the Academy of Sciences of Saint Petersburg for two main reasons. First, because the unique founder was no other than Peter the Great himself and, second, because Cantemir died in 1723 and the Academy did not open its doors before December, 1725²¹. And, of course, Peter the Great undertook no military expedition on the lower Dnieper in 1695 and 1696 but on the lower Don (p. 313), Louis XIV of France could not claim to be recognized by the sultan as a protector of *all* his Christian subjects (p. 319), and, in 1792, the Janissaries could not possibly represent as much as 55% of the total population of Thessaloniki (p. 323).

We have already rejected Mr. Mantran's abuse of the word "Ottoman" as a synonym for a Christian subject of the Sultan²². As we understand this terminology, an Ottoman is anyone who belongs to the ruling class and no one else. We shall therefore reject Mr. Veinstein's same abuse as well (p. 328). On p. 329 it is stated that the *avariz-i divaniye* tax was originally a special contribution imposed by the government during military campaigns. However, we all know that what was exceptional during that time was not a state of war but, rather, a state of peace. Finally, from eye-witness testimony, we know that in 1771 the post of grand visier was no longer held by Muhsinzade Mehmed pasha but by Silihtar Mehmed pasha, former vali fo Bosnia²³.

21. Florinsky M. T., *Russia. - A History and an Interpretation*, New York, 1955, I, p. 408.

22. *Supra*, p. 348.

23. Ύψηλάντης Α. Κ., *Τὰ Μετὰ τὴν Ἀλωσιν (1453-1789)*, Κωνσταντινούπολις, 1870, p. 467 and p. 476.

Except for a two-pages text on Tripoli, which is written by Mr. R. Mantran, the tenth chapter (pp. 341-420) is contribution of Mr. André Raymond, a professor emeritus at the University of Provence, chairman of the Institute for Research and Studies of the Arab and Muslim Worlds at Aix en Provence, President of the French Association for the Study on the Arab and Muslim Worlds and surely more. He tackles in great detail the general history of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth, making some forays into the nineteenth as well. However, the last phase of Ottoman rule on Arab lands is not treated here, nor is it covered systematically in any of the following chapters by anyone else. But this omission must be attributed to the editor's negligence.

Due to the relative scarcity of general or synthetic works on the history of the Arab world under the Ottomans, this is a welcome contribution, well-written and informative. This text confirms the well-known historical fact that the Arab lands, conquered and annexed by the Ottomans when their state and institutions had reached their maturity, remained peripheral and drew less attention from the central government than, say, the lands along the Danube. As a result of this, which may be attributed to the geopolitics of the time, the Arab world, and especially its north African region with Egypt as a leader, maintained its own personality almost intact and its autonomistic tendencies. In a general way then Mr. Raymond's contribution gives us the impression that the Arab peoples were even less integrated into the body-politic of the Ottoman Empire than its central provinces whose population remained overwhelmingly christian, at least in its European provinces.

Mr. R. Mantran, whose previous contribution to this volume has been already presented, has also contributed the eleventh chapter (pp. 421-458), which deals with the so-called Eastern Question for the years 1774-1839. After that and up to 1923 this same topic seems to have been left to the authors of the three following chapters whose content, as we shall see, is less consistent on this particular question. Concise and to the point, the author presents us with a masterly essay which corresponds perfectly well to what a general reader would expect to find in a book of that sort: it is a pity that we did not have more text of that high quality, which would be read by anyone with pleasure and understanding. The author does not limit himself to foreign relations, covering also domestic politics. There is no need for us to justify his methodology: the domestic weaknesses of the Ottomans will, in the long run, determine the nature of the problems they would have to face not only from their immediate neighbors but also from their own subjects.

This otherwise excellent text is not, however, free from blemishes some

of which reveal the author's degree of ignorance of Greek history, which, we think, cannot be disassociated from Ottoman history, at least not to the degree in which it is done in this book. On p. 428, in reference to the life and activities of Rhigas Velestinlis, one of the most talked — about fererunners of the Greek National Liberation Movement, the author invents for Rhigas a new christian name while transforming his pen-name into a family name²⁴. In making Rhigas a founder of the Philiki Hetairia, Mr. Mantran manages to make a second error of fact and this in the same phrase. It is well known that this particular society was founded by some equally known Greek merchants in Odessa in 1814, i.e. a full sixteen years after the death of Rhigas²⁵. This misinformation is repeated on p. 441, whereas a page further down, in connection with the outbreak of the Greek Revolution of March 25, 1821 (old style) in the Peloponnese, bishop Germanos of old Patras is made a patriarch!

Mr. Paul Dumont is the author of the twelfth chapter, which has as a title "The *Tanzimat* period, 1839-1878" (pp. 459-522), a rather dense essay which, in addition to offering information on economic and social history, pursues the subject on political history as well. Because of its content and orientation and because of its causal connection with the previous chapter, in our view a better title could be: "The Eastern Question and the *Tanzimat* period", or something like that.

Mr. Dumont's credentials resemble those of most of the other members of the team: research fellow at the C.N.R.S., lecturer at the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, finally, lecturer at the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations, specializing in nineteenth and twentieth century Ottoman and modern Turkish history. He is writing this text with a good knowledge of the facts and with an assurance which usually accompanies this knowledge.

As indicated at the opening of this chapter, the *Tanzimat* movement was a constitutional experiment perceived at the time by some leading Ottoman liberals as a solution to many problems confronting then a crumbling Empire whose institutions had become anachronistic. This Reform movement was undertaken under the pressure of harsh events on both foreign and domestic fronts, both intimately interconnected. Though for centuries the Ottomans had learned to hate and despise the infidel Europeans, in whom they often recognized their "hereditary enemies", they now had to swallow their pride

24. To put matters straight on that see B. Knös, *L'histoire de la littérature néo-grecque. - La période jusqu'en 1821* (Studia graeca upsalsensia, No. 1), Upsala, 1962, p. 621.

25. Stavrianos L. S., *The Balkans since 1453*, New York, 1961, p. 146.

and adopt legislation and a whole set of institutions, even for their army, all imported from Western Europe.

Here we have the story of the failure of some of the openminded Ottoman statesmen of the time and of their Western sponsors to bring State institutions up-to-date by adjusting them to their most advanced West European models. But this was too much to be expected from the Ottoman establishment, which could not transform itself without losing its own soul and identity, anchored in a hallowed past. In fact, the rank and file of the ruling class did not feel the need of westernization and the experience failed because those who wielded power lacked conviction to see the reforms put into practice.

To be sure, the models of development, sponsored by the Europeans as a way of penetrating the Ottoman state, were not pertinent to Ottoman aspirations. This is why the most important so-called reforms were in the final analysis no more than attempts of constraint imposed by some self-seeking European governments upon the unconvinced and unwilling Ottomans and this is why out of so many projects came no real reform. But in the end, though all this was meant to save the Ottoman state from disintegration, in creating false hopes, it did actually encourage the various ethnic minorities, which were among the first not only to profit from liberalization and Westernization much more than the ethnic Turks themselves but also to develop their own national emancipation movements as well.

The author of the thirteenth chapter, which has the unlikely title of "The Last Jump, 1878-1908", is François Georgeon who, according to information furnished in this volume, is a former resident scholar of the French Institute for Anatolian Studies at Constantinople, research fellow of the C.N.R.S., and lecturer of the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences of Paris.

The reform projects of the previous period having ended up in disaster, it was only to be expected that the reign Abdul Hamid II (1876-1900) would be one of counsevatism and reaction. Indeed, this "Red" sultan of the notorious *Yildiz* palace took no time covering what was left of his faltering Empire with a vast spy network, watching, reporting, censoring and arresting those who made themselves known as liberals during the preceding period. The new policy was one of centralization and of authority. The nationalities—and in particular the Armenians—had to bear the brunt of the policy of assimilation and repression which seemed to be the only way left for saving the Empire from complete disintegration. From now on, the Ottoman state would rely more and more upon Turkish nationalism as a cohesive force in order to survive. The emergence of Turkish nationalism is presented as a reaction

to the birth and growth of the various non-Turkish nationalisms and this is correct and well-said.

However, once again, what is left unsaid is even more eloquent than what is said. The massacre of the Armenians, for example, during the years 1895-6 are dismissed as "the Armenian affair", which may mean anything or nothing at all. (p. 563). A well-informed reader will also note the 1902-3 "events" in Macedonia (pp. 573 and 574), knowing fully well that the author whitewashes something very important. Indeed, one can hardly follow Mr. Georgeon's tendency to underestimate the knowledge as well as the intelligence of his readers. For example, he presents us with a constitutional text, drafted by Tala'at pasha, as if it had become an adopted constitution. Then suddenly, without explanation, we read about its abrogation and even about the dissolution of a Parliament that never was. On p. 576, in his concluding remarks, this author even writes of the Young Turks aiming to reestablish a constitutional government. We think it is an abuse in terminology to talk about "Constitution" and "Parliament" in Hamidian Turkey as if they were functioning institutions: they never were.

Finally, before leaving this author, the reader must be warned that the population of the Russian Empire at the end of the nineteenth century was over 125 million according to the census of 1897²⁶ and not 65 million as claimed here, whereas the estimated birth-rate needs substantiation (p. 544). On p. 554 he, too, refers to this unrecognized by us historical species, "the non-muslim Ottomans".

The fourteenth chapter, "The death of an Empire, 1908-1923" (pp. 577-647), is the product of a joint effort by the authors of the two previous chapters, Mr. F. Georgeon continuing to p. 604 and Mr. P. Dumont contributing the next forty-three pages. In fact, the former of the two pursues the same subject in the same spirit with the same methodology and style and brings it up to the conclusion of the Turco-Italian War of 1912. The reader is offered a rather sympathetic account of the four year uncoordinated, implanified and therefore unsuccessful efforts of the Young Turks to find a way of saving the crumbling Empire by transforming it into a modern Turkish national state. Of course, it would be too much to expect of the non-Turkish nationalities to let themselves willingly be absorbed by the Turks, after nearly five centuries of continuous struggle for survival. We read with astonishment that Bulgaria won its independence as late as 1908 (p. 580), we meet again

26. Riasanovsky N. Y., *A History of Russia*, 2nd ed., New York, 1969, p. 478.

this unreal "Christian Ottoman" (p. 587) who never was, we hear about Greek comitadjis and some other absurdities of the kind as well.

Mr. Dumont's part of the contribution begins with the opening of the First Balkan War, continues with the Second and with the Ottoman involvement on the side of the Central Powers during the First World War, and terminates with the Treaty of Lausanne as a crowning point marking the triumph of modern Turkish nationalism: it reads like a dramatic story involving life, death, and resurrection. As a consequence of the repeated failures of all those Ottoman statesmen who tried, during the hamidian period, to maintain a decaying state by restructuring its institutions, and following a new series of disasters at the battlefront which resulted in the physical expulsion of the Ottomans from both Christian South-East Europe and Arab Middle East, there was no other alternative left but to create a new national state. Thus, the old drama of the destruction of the Byzantine State and the birth of modern Hellenism was once more re-enacted on the same spot.

The fifteenth chapter is the product of a combined effort by Mr. Jean-Paul Roux, research director of the C.N.R.S. and professor of the Louvre School, who has written on Ottoman art within what he calls-without circumscribing it geographically-"Turkish territory" (pp. 649-682), and by M. A. Raymond, whom we have already met and who added a few more pages on Muslim architecture in Arab countries during the Ottoman period (pp. 683-694).

Undoubtedly a master of his topic, Mr. Roux gives us an admirer's appreciation of Ottoman art in general. Right from the beginning it becomes evident that the author does not have the slightest idea about the basic rules of historical methodology. As we have noted above, this sympathetic disposition is a common denominator in the entire team but here admiration is pushed as far as it can go. Thus Ottoman art is presented as authentic and autonomous, as having a soul of its own and as being at the basis of a "civilization", something which apparently escaped the notice of Arnold Toynbee, who did not include it in his well-known list of world civilizations. According to this line of thought, the background of this art is entirely ignored, the non-Turkish ingredients are brushed aside, underestimated, misrepresented through half-truths, omitted, or even flatly denied, while non-Turkish artists at the service of the Ottomans are not even recognized. This essay would have been much better, were it not for the author's refusal to give credit to Iranian art and artists, not to mention the Byzantine heritage in the domain of architecture in which the monuments still stand for anyone to see, to compare and to draw his or her own conclusions.

Mr. Raymond's contribution is simply a summary of the main ideas presented in the fourth chapter of his book *The Great Arab Cities in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1984), pp. 91-136. It reads like a report describing architectural monuments in the Arab provinces during the Ottoman period. Compared with the architecture of the capital these monuments are noted only for their relative modesty, something which deserved some explanations. Since no author pointed out the fact that the Ottoman establishment constituted an enormous parasite feeding for centuries upon the vital resources of the provinces, and since no one bothered to explain the causes of Ottoman prosperity, which is at the basis of Ottoman art, it is worth while to underline again the predatory nature of the Ottoman regime as well as the centralized administration and the personalized form of sultanic power.

The conquering Ottomans, themselves slaving for their master, siphoned off and diverted to the capital on a permanent basis, almost all surplus wealth produced in the provinces, not only the provinces studied by Mr. Raymond but all provinces. On p. 679, for example, Mr. Roux tells us that, during the sixteenth century, over one thousand men and women worked day and night in the palace in order to feed its five thousand residents, and this without taking into account an enormous army and administration continuously preying upon the resources of the provinces.

The last chapter of this book is written by Louis Bazin, professor of the Turkish language and literature at the University of Paris III, at the National Institute for Eastern Languages and Civilizations, director of studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and also of the Institute for Turkish Studies at the University of Paris. His contribution covers the intellectual and cultural life in the Ottoman Empire and it is written with great care and real talent. Not only does he know perfectly well what he is writing about, but he expresses it with a great economy of words, with objectivity and as closely and as faithfully as anyone can reproduce the past.

In introducing this essay, the author warns the reader that his contribution will be incomplete and he keeps his word. For example, in the section devoted to Ottoman historiography the interesting chronicle of Vassif Efendi on the war of the Ottomans against the Russians during the years 1769-1774, translated into French by Caussin de Perceval and published as early as 1822, has not been mentioned at all. Then there are some objectionable oversimplifications: we do not think it is proper to call a "university" sultan Mehmed II's religious educational establishments (*medrese*), whereas the word "aristocracy" is out of place in the Ottoman context (pp. 704, 718 and 723). Finally,

even if true, it is not necessary, in six consecutive pages, to mention six times the homosexuality of the Ottomans (pp. 705-709).

The editor has provided no general conclusion to the book, nor was it perhaps possible to provide one, given the nature of the text. In closing this overview of all these contributions we must admit that our greatest difficulty in reviewing them as fairly as possible, especially where we met new information, was the almost total absence of references to the sources for the purpose of checking the ground upon which rested some unusual propositions. Consequently, this reader felt it necessary to deploy a great amount of caution in accepting at face value first time important information, especially when it contradicted other well-known Western authors.