

with ecclesiastical pronouncements, studying even the texts of Ptochoprodromos which, as we know, provide much information about the food of both monks and laity. The author studies the texts of Agapios Landos, *Geoponikon* (Agronomy) (1643), the works of K. Michael *Diaitetike* (Dietetics) (Vienna 1794) and Pedalion (The Helm) (1800), and the correspondence of Anastasia Gordiou (1681-1724) in which there are many and varied observations on the diet of Greeks under Turkish rule.

Ms Matthaïou has given us an original book on an everyday theme which interests us, the foodstuffs and diet of monks and laity under the Turks, using all available sources from the Byzantine period (10th century) until our own times: documents from the Turkish domination, the ceremonies of the monks, chronicles and stories both anonymous and attributed, memoirs, articles and studies by expert researchers and local scholars on the subject of foodstuffs, the mechanisms of the market and of the economy, the records of travellers and so on; in short, a wonderful book and very useful to the understanding of Greek life under the Turks.

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J. McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923*, London and New York 1997, pp. xv + 406.

This is one of those books that are based on scientific criteria but addressed to a general readership¹; indeed, the publisher (Longman) says as much on the back cover. McCarthy's is a familiar name to those interested in the history of the Ottoman Empire, particularly the later period².

In structure the book is little different from other histories of the Ottoman Empire. McCarthy starts by investigating the historical lineage of the Turks as far as 1281 (pp. 1-32); devotes a chapter to "The First Ottomans", i.e. the history of the first sultans, from Osman to the end of Mehmet II's first reign in 1446 (pp. 33-63); and continues with the so-called "classical" Ottoman period until the death of Süleyman the Law-giver (*Kanunî*) in 1566 (pp. 65-100). These chapters follow a linear narrative sequence, giving a simple, precise, and absorbing account of the events that transformed a small, insignificant Turkish principality (*beylik*) in Asia Minor into the largest and most powerful state in the world. In the next chapter (pp. 101-143), McCarthy describes the structure of this state, noting the points which assured its

1. This is attested by the absence of footnotes and bibliography.

2. Note, for instance, his very well-known book, *Muslims and Minorities*, New York 1983.

ascendancy over other contemporary states. Chapter Five (pp. 145-191) looks at the period 1566-1789, and here, quite rightly in my view, McCarthy does not give a linear account of events, but lays out the chapter thematically, dwelling on and analysing specific events, institutions, and subjects (*Celalis*, *ayans*, reforms, the Battle of Vienna) that played an important part in what he terms "destabilization". At the same time, he records the chronological succession of the sultans, with a thumbnail portrait of each one and an account of his part in the historical evolution of the Empire. Chapter Six (pp. 193-212) is actually a transitional chapter, before McCarthy moves on to more recent events: here he examines the phenomena of nationalism and imperialism, which changed the political map of the Middle East in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The book's distinctive aspect lies in the next two chapters. Chapter Seven (pp. 213-258) deals with the Turks' "Environment and Life", on the basis of the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century, owing, McCarthy says, to lack of data for earlier periods. Chapter Eight (pp. 259-282) describes "Turkish society and individual life". Such subjects as the structure of the villages, domestic architecture, towns and cities, Constantinople, marriage and family, men and women are discussed in these two chapters in a somewhat defensive manner, since McCarthy is essentially trying to dispel anti-Turkish prejudices that the West has nurtured for centuries. In Chapter Nine (pp. 283-325), he analyses the internal history of the Empire in the light of the Reform period (*Tanzimat*); and in Chapter Ten (pp. 327-345), he recounts the tribulations, the massacres, the displacements, and the enforced emigrations inflicted on the Turkish and Moslem populations of the region, chiefly in the nineteenth century, by the Christians (Serbs, Greek, Bulgarians) who were then establishing their nation states. Chapter Eleven (pp. 347-367) looks at the events of the Balkan Wars and the First World War, while Chapter Twelve (pp. 369-388) recounts the "War of National Independence", which led to the establishment of the Turkish Republic. The book ends with a brief glossary and an index, and is interspersed with handy maps and drawings that clearly illustrate the text.

The purpose of the book is to provide an easily digested account of the Ottoman Empire for a mainly Anglo-Saxon, non-specialised readership which knows little about the history of the period and even less about the geography of the region. One detail in the title, I think, indicates McCarthy's intention: this is a history of the Ottoman Turks, not the Ottoman Empire. Having chosen this title, however, McCarthy has in fact written about what we should call "the Turkish-Moslem populations in the Ottoman Empire". His vague and inconsistent use of the terms "Muslim", "Turkish", and "Ottoman" proves it. He talks, for instance, about "Muslim trade", "Muslim economy", "Muslim

army", and not "Ottoman", as one would expect in these contexts, especially in the first centuries of the Empire. The adjective "Muslim" is sometimes replaced by "Turkish". The same vagueness—and in this case ignorance—is shown in the nouns he uses for the inhabitants of the Empire: although "Ottoman" is the widely approved and accepted term at least until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, McCarthy persistently uses "Turk/Turkish".

Although the simple style of the whole book may be counted a virtue in the early chapters, where terms unfamiliar to the layperson (such as *vakf*, *mülk*, *timar*) are clearly explained, in the latter part it descends into simplism. As a result, the book is incomplete and not fully accurate, and gives an one-sided picture. McCarthy's angle, and also, to an extent, his *idée fixe*, is to change the negative image of the Turks in Western eyes. A two-page subsection devoted to the Ottomans' tolerance towards the non-Moslem populations (pp. 131-132); constant, glowing references to the Turks' creative role in the history of the region (McCarthy praises them to the skies on the basis of his opinion of the Seljuq Empire on p. 18, admires the first Ottoman sultans at great length on pp. 38-39); a frantic justification of certain features of Turkish society that distinguish it from Western society (the equality of women, polygamy, the structure of the family) in Chapters Seven and Eight; the adoption of the views of Turkish scholars regarding questions that the scholarly community has not yet resolved (on p. 45, for instance, McCarthy dates the fall of Adrianople to 1361, rather than 1369, which is probably more likely): these are just some of the details that indicate the "provenance" of McCarthy's views.

The last three chapters are rife with such details. The whole of Chapter Ten is a threnody for the Turkish populations and their trials and tribulations in the nineteenth century. For instance, in the two subsections on Greek independence (pp. 337-339) and Serbia and Bulgaria in 1875-1878 (pp. 339-341), rather than recounting the birth of these three independent Balkan states (which would be of interest to the ordinary reader), McCarthy gives a long recital of the sufferings of the Turkish populations at the hands of the Christians in the Balkans. Shortly before this, he describes the massacres and the forced displacement of the Turks and the other Moslem peoples in this period as the greatest disasters in human history (p. 330). He finishes up by bewailing the expulsion of the Turks from areas (such as Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Armenia) where they had been living for more than 400 years (p. 331). Reading this paragraph, one cannot help wondering, in that case, what to make of someone (viz. a Turk) who expelled people from places where they had been living for more than 1.500 years.

I do not believe in the fantasy of "objective truth" in history. So it is in my

opinion perfectly legitimate for McCarthy to hold the views he does, for they are all part of whatever "objective truth" there might be. The danger lies in expressing them in a general textbook. Since this view to a great extent determines the structure of the book (compare Chapters Seven and Eight), I feel that it is ultimately detrimental to the whole work. To give the reader an one-sided picture of the Empire and ignore the fate of its Christian populations (who were no less its subjects than the Moslems), scientifically speaking, makes for a seriously flawed book.

In conclusion, *The Ottoman Turks* may be read by a non-specialised reader³ who bears in mind that it presents the "Turkish view" of the history of the Empire. It could not really be described as a textbook for a deeper study of Ottoman history, since it lacks even the most basic bibliography. In the end, what it does offer is an example of "contrived" history writing.

PHOKION KOTZAGEORGIS

Thanos Veremis and Mark Dragoumis, *Greece World Bibliographical Series*. Volume 17, Oxford Clío Press, 1998, pp. 339.

There are number of localities in the world containing in their name the word "new" such as New York, New Orleans, New Caledonia or even New Zealand which differs from the other as there is no (old) Zealand as such. There is however no country, city or region that is even informally called "Modern ... something" except, at times, Greece.

As the authors of the —just published— annotated bibliography on Greece mention in their introduction: "Greece is an elusive notion ... In its strictest possible sense it refers to the nation-state born in 1830 ... However, a bibliography covering Greece as if it were only a Balkan state ... would be disappointing to most informed readers. For all those fascinated by the monuments, the artifacts, the ancient tragedies still performed today to mass audiences ... the term Greece conveys much more than the name of a state".

The 998 entries cover the country and its people, travel guides, traveller's accounts, flora and fauna, archaeology, the history of the country from the archaic period to contemporary Greece, population, language, religion, society, health and medicine, politics, military interventions and dictatorships, public administration, defence and security, foreign relations, the economy, agriculture and industry, transport and communications, trade, energy, labour,

3. It has absolutely nothing new to say to researchers of the Ottoman Empire (whether historians, archaeologists, philologists, linguists, constitutionalists, sociologists, or anthropologists), for they are perfectly well aware of the "Turkish view" of things.