

Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών

Τόμ. 5 (1984)



World Bibliographical Series, vol.27: Turkey, compiled by Meral Guclu

Paschalis M. Kitromilides

doi: [10.12681/deltiokms.221](https://doi.org/10.12681/deltiokms.221)

Copyright © 2015, Paschalis M. Kitromilides



Άδεια χρήσης [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

Kitromilides, P. M. (1984). World Bibliographical Series, vol.27: Turkey, compiled by Meral Guclu. *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών*, 5, 528–532. <https://doi.org/10.12681/deltiokms.221>

World Bibliographical Series, Vol. 27: *Turkey*, compiled by Meral Güçlü. Oxford and Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1981, p. xlii + 333.

The World Bibliographical Series, initiated in 1978 with a volume on Yugoslavia, is now an imposing and generally acclaimed project, well established in the field of international bibliography. Its aim is to provide an interpretation of each country of the world through a «selective annotated bibliography» of works primarily in the English language. Volume 27 in the *Series* is devoted to Turkey and it has been compiled by Meral Güçlü, a professional librarian and bibliographer. This is one of the better volumes in the entire series, thanks to the competence and experience of the compiler but also due to the wealth, quantitative and qualitative, of materials on Turkey in English.

The introduction is a general survey of Ottoman and Modern Turkish history which reflects broadly the official outlook of Turkish national historiography. Although it gives an overall impression of the historical evolution of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, this survey is necessarily schematic and at some points it is wanting in precision and accuracy. Thus it is inaccurate to say that from 1077 Nicea became the Seljuk capital (p. xv). The city was recaptured by the Byzantines in 1097 and remained in their hands until 1331, when it was conquered by the Ottomans. The Seljuk capital and the major centre of Seljuk culture was Konya (Iconion). The narrative of Ottoman expansion in the sixteenth century (p. xvii) omits any mention of the most famous naval battle of the century at Lepanto (1571), which marked the beginning of the end of Ottoman supremacy in the Mediterranean. Similarly the brief reference to the wars of the seventeenth century (p. xxi) does not note the protracted conflict of the Ottoman Empire with Venice over the control of Crete (1645-1669) which ended with the fall of Candia in 1669. Egypt on the other hand was occupied by Britain in 1882 and not during the First World War (p. xxii). A minor correction: the inhabitants of Montenegro are called Montenegrens, not Montenegrins (p. xxii). The imperial edict which initiated the *Tanzimat* era in 1839 was the *Hatti Sherif of Gülhané* and not the *Hatti Humayun*, which was not issued until 1856 under the pressure of Turkey's European allies in the Crimean War (p. xxiii). In the

survey of more recent years some politically sensitive issues are passed over summarily by the mere reiteration of highly controversial views in the form of matter-of-fact statements. It is an understatement to describe the Armenians as just «defeated» at the end of the First World War (p. xxvi). It is not an established historical fact that Smyrna was burnt by the retreating Greek army (p. xxvii). On the contrary historical evidence points to the conclusion that the fire that destroyed the city was in all probability started by the bands of Turkish irregulars who entered the city after its evacuation by the Greek forces. This evidence is discussed in the well known book by Marjorie Housepian, *The Smyrna Affair*, New York: Harcourt 1968, which curiously is not included in the selections of the bibliography. The 1939 annexation of the Hatay was achieved after the exertion of considerable pressure by Turkey and the manipulation of the local referendum and not as the simple outcome of a vote taken among the population of the province (p. xxxi).

The 993 entries which make up the main body of the book present a fairly complete and many-sided picture of contemporary Turkey, through the prism of the contributions of a great number of Turkish and foreign scholars. The organization of the volume follows the general format of the series, with sections on the country and its people, description and travel, geography, geology, flora and fauna, prehistory and archeology, history, population, nationalities and minorities, languages and dialects, religion, social conditions, social services, health and welfare, politics, constitution and legal system, administration and local government, foreign relations, economics, finance and banking, trade and industry, agriculture, employment and manpower, labour movement and trade unions, statistics, environment and planning, education, science and technology, literature, the arts, libraries, museums and archives, mass media, professional periodicals, encyclopedias and directories, and bibliographies. This detailed listing of the volume's contents reveals the scope of research that underlies the bibliographical selections it comprises. The variety and usually high standards of many selections create the general impression that Turkey has fared quite well in English-language writing. This is particularly true in some fields such as Ottoman history (selections 197-265), political science and international relations (selections 473-557, 598-685) and social anthropology (selections 426-470). Of special interest are the several studies of social and cultural change, for which the conditions and experiences of Turkish society seem to have offered paradigmatic cases.

In general the selections are well chosen and to the point and the annotations are on the whole informative and objective. Certain others how-

ever will have to be corrected in future editions in light of subsequent scholarship and criticism. A case in point is with the *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* by S. J. Shaw (no. 190), for which it is claimed that «it will remain an outstanding reference work in the field». This appraisal must be radically revised after Speros Vryonis, Jr.'s exhaustive critical review of this book (*Balkan Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, 1983). Some serious omissions of important older works will also have to be rectified in future editions, along with the addition of newer materials. For instance none of the many important works by R. M. Dawkins on Greek language and folklore in Ottoman Asia Minor is included. At the very least his classic, *Modern Greek in Asia Minor* (Cambridge University Press, 1916) must be added to the section on languages and dialects as well as his important article «The Crypto-Christians of Turkey», *Byzantion*, vol. 8 (1933), pp. 247-75, which supplements very appropriately F. W. Hasluck's important work on religious syncretism in the traditional society of Asia Minor (no. 417).

Although the purpose of bibliographies in the *Series* is primarily to present works in English, I think that some sources of outstanding importance published in other languages should not be entirely excluded. A selection of such works might provide the user of the bibliography with a better idea of the range of writing on the particular country as well as supply hints for further research. A case in point with reference to the volume under review is the important survey of Turkey edited by Professor Werner Kündig-Steiner, *Die Türkei. Raum und Mensch, Kultur und Wirtschaft in Gegenwart und Vergangenheit*, Tübingen and Basel: Horst Erdmann Verlag 1974, 672 pp. The work exemplifies the best traits of German thorough and systematic scholarship and includes an extensive thematic bibliography (pp. 654-665), which reflects the range of writing on Turkey in German. I think that an entry on this book might profitably be added to a future edition.

On the other hand especially welcome are all selections in Turkish. These selections include primarily publications of a technical character (e.g. censuses, nos. 307-308; dictionaries, nos. 382-386; statistics, nos. 745-746; and bibliographies, nos. 966, 971, 974, 978-979, 982, 984, 987, 989-991), newspapers (nos. 938-941) and journals (nos. 943, 951-957) and titles in literature and the arts (nos. 779, 796, 797, 807, 855, 858, 861-862, 868, 883, 894). A few additional titles however (e.g. nos. 111, 315-316, 338-339, 447, 502, 526, 546, 730, 737, 743, 747, 751, 917-918) bring to the reader's attention some important contributions of contemporary Turkish social science. Awareness of these sources can indeed enhance our

understanding of Turkish society and one would wish that a few more works of equal significance were included, especially in the field of history.

It is true that in a selective bibliography choices will have to be made and omissions as well as exclusions are inevitable. As a compiler of another volume in the *World Bibliographical Series* I am well aware of both the problem of selection and the constraints inherent in the composition of a selective bibliography. Nevertheless in view of the editorial stipulation that the purpose of the bibliographical profile ought to be to provide a true interpretation of each country, the selections should be representative of the complexities associated with each case. So it is regrettable that in this particular volume the selections in the section on prehistory and archeology (nos. 119-146) tend to convey a picture of an almost exclusively Hittite past of pre-Ottoman Turkey, overlooking almost completely the voluminous archeological literature in English and in other leading Western languages on the splendours of the Greek and Roman antiquities of Asia Minor.

Despite the existence of this extensive scholarly bibliography most of the important sites of Greek and Roman antiquity in Asia Minor appear in this volume only through a few annotations of travel books. The same is true of the spectacular Byzantine heritage of Asia Minor. Jerphanion's monumental collection on Cappadocia should have been mentioned as well as Marcel Restle, *Byzantine wall painting in Asia Minor*, 3 vols., (Recklinghausen 1967). Another notable absence concerns the work of A. A. M. Bryer on the history and archeology of the Pontos. Bryer's writings are especially important and possess an interest that transcends that of the specialists because they focus on the historical watershed and the interconnections between Byzantine and Turkish society in the Pontos, a quite special region of Asia Minor.

The foregoing suggestions bring out the basic weakness in the structure of this bibliography. In my judgement this has to do with the «interpretation» of the country, which as an overall objective constitutes the principle of selection in compiling the volumes in the *Series* as a whole. The principle of interpretation means a well rounded picture which provides a perspective on the country from all angles of vision. The selections composing the volume on *Turkey* reflect instead a tendency to minimize – and, where possible, efface – many of the complexities of the rich history of the region occupied by present day Turkey, by overlooking where possible the non-Turkish aspects of this heritage. This is regrettable I think, because for the sake of modern nationalist sensitivities it sa-

crifices not only the integrity of the historical picture but also the magnificence of a cultural tradition of unique diversity. This brings me to another thought. Nationalism as a force in modern politics has been destructive enough and its consequences are irreversible. It is pointless nevertheless to allow these effects to continue to be felt in the field of scholarly discourse as well, with understanding and interpretation as its foremost victims.

These observations are not meant to detract from the value of the work which as a selective bibliography accomplishes its goal and meets the overall guidelines of the *Series* quite well. They are put forward with the sole purpose to advance the shared concern of all those partaking in scholarly endeavours for better understanding and more precise knowledge of their subject. In conclusion I think that it might be relevant to hint once again at the central idea that guided my discussion of the development of Cypriot studies in the introduction to the volume on Cyprus in the same *Series*. Even such a technical subject as bibliography is often coloured by the ideological preconceptions and political preferences that every scholar inevitably brings to the task. The best way to face up to this inescapable fact of scholarly life is to admit to it and try to be as alert and sincere about it as possible. Only then will it be possible to avoid the distortions to which it can lead. The function of criticism should be to contribute to this effort.

PASCHALIS M. KITROMILIDES